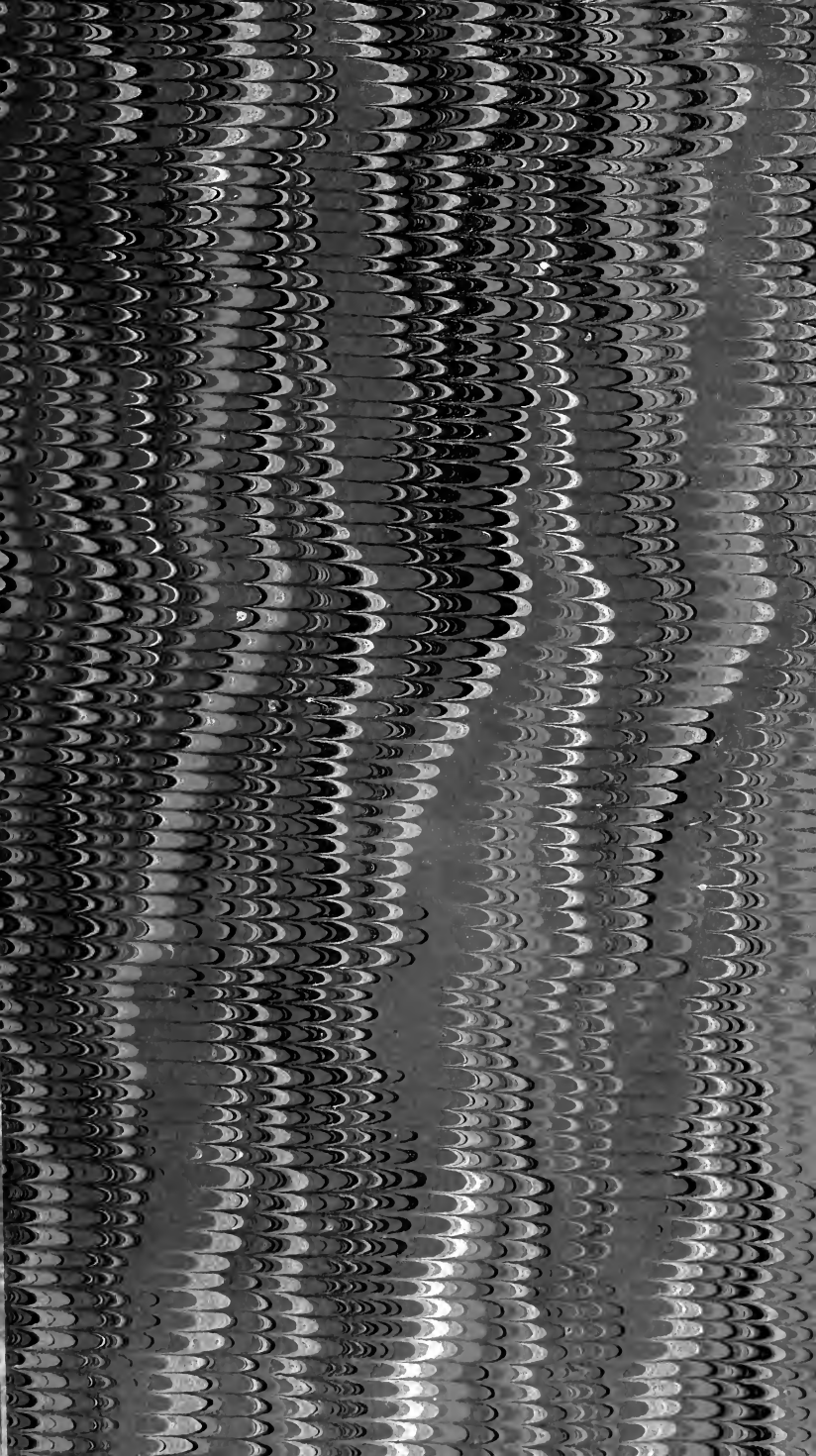


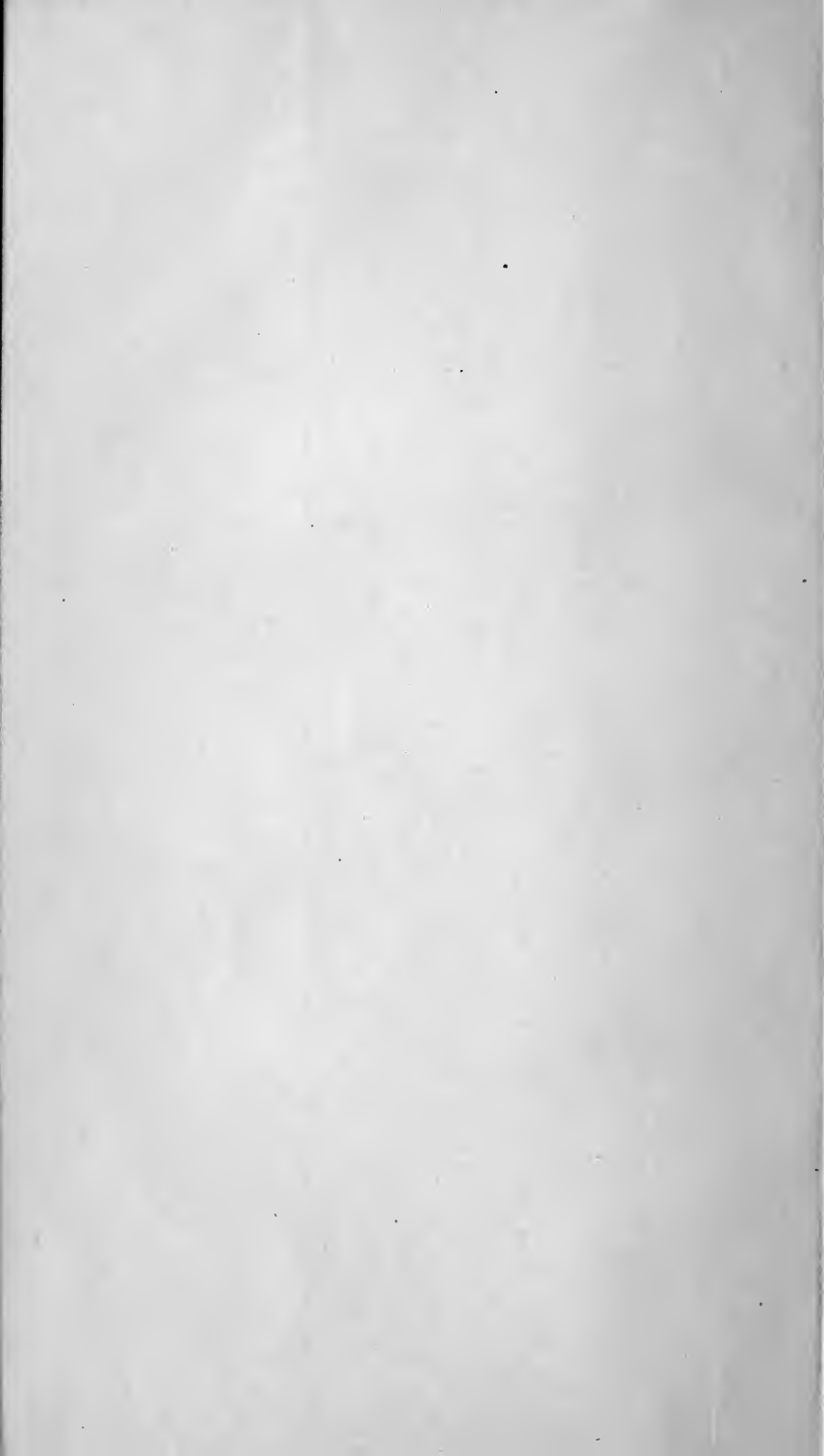
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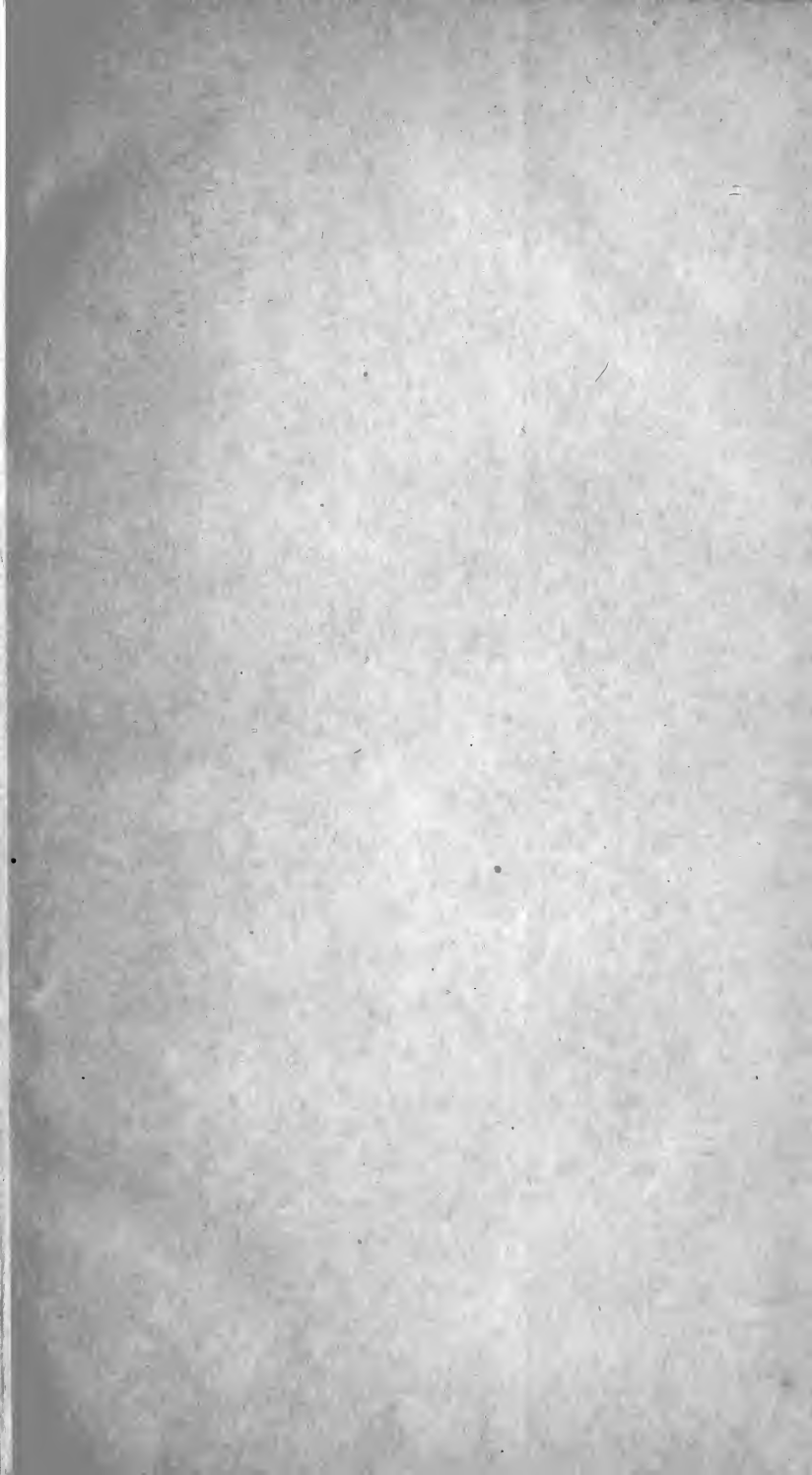
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.













DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS;

OR,

Spiritual Letters

TO

FAITHFUL MEN.

BY JAMES OSBOURN, V. D. M.

Late Pastor of the Third Baptist Church in Baltimore.

— Ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things....*Paul.*



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PREFACE.

INASMUCH as it can be attested, that the Letters composing this little volume, have, in several instances, been made a blessing to those to whom they were first written, why may it not be hoped that they may also, under the blessing of God, be made useful to the sons and daughters of men on a much larger scale? With a hope, therefore, that the God of Jacob will bless the reading of them to many, who could not have seen them if they remained in manuscript form, the author feels willing to give them publicity from the press.

And, with regard to their being void of erudition, this, the author supposes, cannot be any sound argument why the God of boundless wisdom, power and grace should not make them useful to the sons of men in general, and to the *household of faith* in particular, seeing he often performs wonders by means and instruments the most inconsiderable.

You are, I perceive, bereft of many comforts, which not long ago you were in full possession of, and amongst the rest your health makes one. These are heavy strokes my brother, but they came from God, a covenant God, a God of love and mercy, of which you are partaker; they, therefore, are not sent in vain; nor yet at random. On the subject of afflictions permit me to make a few strictures.

Afflictions have been the common lot of God's people in all ages of the world; they, therefore, are no proof of the Lord's displeasure; but they are proofs, and very striking proofs that all is not right somewhere; say, that man is *depraved*, man is *mortal*, and that this world is not his resting place. Christ the great and only head of the church, passed through a sea of affliction and heart-rending sorrow, when a sojourner in this world; not, however, that he was a sinner in the same sense that man is; man is an *actual* sinner, Christ a *reputed* one; yet even this subjected him to sorrow, affliction, pain, and to death.

What anguish of soul! what torture of body! how poignant the sorrow! how acute the grief! and how gloomy the scene, when as a substitute for sinners he had to bear the weighty vengeance of a God who was highly incensed at all our sins!

On the innocent Lamb of God, our surety, the dreadful storm of divine wrath fell with all its ponderous weight; and what he felt on the occasion is inconceivable by mortal man! When the vengeance of heaven and our sins formed a junction, and bore down upon him on the accursed tree what a tragical sight appeared! Here, my afflicted brother, was eminently fulfilled the saying that is written, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Lam. i. 12.

This was the day of God's wrath indeed, or as in another place it is called, *the day of the Lord's vengeance*. Isa. xxxiv. 8. This was, as it were, God's great reckoning day, when all the sins of his church were collected together and viewed as one debt and placed to the account of him, who, of his free choice, became bail or surety for the principal debtors. But O what a smarting time of it he had. "He that is surety for a stranger, shall smart for it." Prov. xi. 15. And Christ did smart, he did suffer greatly on this memorable day, *the day of the vengeance of the Lord*. O! what a sufferer was here, what a burning day was this;

a combination of events all calculated to swell the afflictions of the glorious Lamb of God.

If it be so, that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering, why may not we, who are his followers, expect, in a certain sense, to be perfected in the same way; or that we, at least, must suffer afflictions whilst in this life, so that we may learn to set a higher estimate on the life to come. Besides, we should do well to remember that the greatest saints have suffered and been afflicted in a most grievous manner.

Abel was suddenly slain by his cruel and unnatural brother. Moses, also, suffered afflictions with the people of God. Joseph, likewise, had his share of afflictions; and we ought to remember the afflictions of Joseph. Job, too, was afflicted out of measure, and, perhaps, no case is more like your own than was his. David, also, met with trials, troubles, and affliction in great abundance. Jeremiah was a man that saw affliction by the rod of God's wrath. Paul, likewise, suffered greatly, yea more than is usual for men to suffer. Now, to be slain by one's own brother, to be sold for a slave, to have all one's children slain, to be hunted like a partridge on the mountain, to be persecuted for well doing, whipped often, imprisoned wrongfully, made to fast frequent-

ly, to die often in appearance and once in reality, and that unjustly, are hard things, my brother, and yet it is all right. If it was right for Christ to suffer, it must also be right for his followers to suffer.

And that it was right for Christ to suffer is plain from this consideration; if he had not suffered, we could not have been saved; and if he had not been pierced through, as he was, with many sorrows, not one of the sons of Adam would have ever possessed any true comfort or sound solace. And for this end, among others, we see it was just and right that the Captain of our salvation should be made perfect through suffering. Our glorious sufferer, Christ the Lord, was that altar, upon which fire was continually burning, who must undergo the great heat of the day of God's wrath; and his members must be like the bush in the fire. If we suffer with him here, we shall also reign with him in glory. "No cross, no crown." If we are without chastisements, whereof all the saints of God are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. Our afflictions here may be very fierce and heart-rending, but they must be short. And if we are afflicted in body, mind, and family, yet, if God takes care of our better part, and saves us at last from eternal burnings, we shall

have no just cause to complain but to be thankful, seeing it is much lighter to suffer here in the flesh, and our souls saved in Jesus, than to have an easy passage through life, and, in the end, our souls cast away.

Besides, our sufferings are what we justly deserve, they being the fruits of sin. Our rebellion against God, also, loudly calls for all that we undergo in this life. Our strokes, my brother, are far lighter than our crimes. However heavy God's hand may be laid upon us, we may say that he deals with us as he dealt with the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, "he *lightly* afflicted the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali." Isa. ix. 1.

Afflictions when sanctified are blessings in disguise, inasmuch as they "work for us," mark that, for us, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." You, my brother, are not the first man that hath suffered in the flesh, nor is it likely that you will be the last. I am persuaded in my mind, that should the Lord remove you by this affliction, from mortality's vale to immortal glory, one hour in heaven would make you forget all that you are now labouring under. Nay more, or rather less, God is able to raise you up again, make up the loss sustained, bless you with so much of his divine presence, and so to place you in

this life, that in less than a year from this date, you should look back and see, and confess too, that mercy was mixt with all his dealings with you.

I knew a God-fearing man in England, who lost eight or nine children in infancy, on which account he at times murmured and fretted amazingly, and could not then see through the mystery, or why and wherefore God should so deal with him. But presently the Lord took away his wife also, and then the first secret began to open a little, and he saw the wisdom of God in his taking away the little ones; for, humanly speaking, what could he have done with a house full of little children, afflicted as he always was with almost blindness, when his beloved wife was gone. This good man at that time was in tolerable easy circumstances, but the Lord followed him, as he did Job, with stroke upon stroke, till he was not only bereaved of his wife and children, but of all he was worth in the world. And after God had exercised him in this way for some years, he gave him another loving, affectionate, and industrious wife and three fine children, together with an abundance of the good things of this life, which he is now enjoying in the fear of his God; and he can and does say, "the Lord has done all things well!"

But, perhaps, you are thinking that the Lord will not deal in this way with you. I do not say that he will, nor is he bound so to do. But I do say that his hand is not shortened, nor his ear dull of hearing, and should he refuse to favor you as in the above case, yet if your soul is saved in the end, all will be well and you will have to adore his great name to all eternity. Besides, the very cup of affliction is mixed with mercy; but whether you can see it in this light or not, is not for me at present to say. But though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, he intends nothing more by it than his own declarative glory and your real good; and that these ends will be answered by it, I no more doubt than I doubt the existence of Jehovah. Be still, therefore, and know that he is God, and that he cannot act in a way that will make against himself, or against those who are brought to love and fear him.

Once more—when we consider what many of the Lord's dear people have gone through and suffered, our afflictions rather lessen—as, of their being stoned, sawn asunder, wandering about in sheep-skins and goat-skins—being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth; and yet notwithstanding all

these things, they were the beloved ones of the Lord. Have we suffered any thing like this? have we resisted unto blood in the cause of our Redeemer? It is true, the Lord has of late just touched a vein near your heart; but it is done only to keep down the fever and not to bleed you to death; and, admitting it should be to death, we ought not to sorrow as those who have no hope, since it is said that the *blood of the saints is precious in his sight*.

The saints are compared to willows, and they must expect to be shaken with the wind and blustering storms. David, when in a storm had something to comfort him, he tells us, and it was the pleasing remembrance of God's mercy and goodness towards him in times past. "This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me." And cannot you my brother, remember the time when God's word quickened, comforted, and made all within you to rejoice? My brother, my afflicted brother, have you not a *Bochim*, a *Bethel*, a *Hill Mizar*, by which you can remember the loving kindness of the Lord? Can you not recollect the time, the place, and season when Jacob's God was all and in all to your soul? Is he not the same now as then judge ye? Can we suppose that his mind is capable of changing, and that he will grow

weary of his saints? Has not God surprised you by lifting upon you the light of his countenance, and by giving you most indubitable pledges of his good will towards you? And now that he is surprising you by afflictions, can you think that he is the less kind.

If we would be thoroughly acquainted with God, we must take different views of him. In prosperity we have a front view of him; but in affliction we have a side or an oblique view of the same object. But view him as we may, his mind certainly knows of no mutation, but is perpetually the same; it is not incident to change as ours are. Nor does your present affliction any more argue a different disposition in God towards you than towards another who is not afflicted. You doubtless know, that one and the same cause, without any change in itself, may produce different effects. For example: The sun hath but one simple act of shining, and yet this one act hardens clay and dissolves ice, makes the flowers smell sweet, and a corpse to smell offensive.

Again—let a man in decent apparel stand before a looking glass, and you will find the glass to hold forth the very same figure with the object that stands before it. If another man in coarse raiment presents himself before the glass, the very same glass will offer to view

a similar likeness with the object before it. And now I ask, where is the change? in the glass or in the different objects? In the latter—we are all agreed. Improvement. You are afflicted, but God is not wroth. You are broken in spirit and full of tossings to and fro, but God is of one mind and he intends well by all that has yet befallen you. If we, my brother, are permitted to drink of the cup of mercy, we must calculate on having a glass of bitters held out to us sometimes.

When men undertake to go round the world they go by water, because it is the shortest and best way. And so when men set out for the upper and better world, they calculate to sail through waters of affliction and seas of tribulation, because it is the shortest cut and the most direct way, the only way. It is through *much* tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. In the world ye shall have tribulation. Pertinent to the occasion, is the case of David the king of Israel, who, we are told, went up to the mount of Olivet and the people with him; and as they went they wept. “And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and all the people went up, weeping as they went up.” 2 Sam. xv. 30.

Our antitypical David also ascended up a much higher mount, to heaven, and they who

would follow him up this mount will have to sweat for it, they will have to weep as they go up.

This, my brother, is the common road, the king's high way that leadeth to the mount of God; and all other paths lead astray, how fair soever they seem. A man that walks towards the sun is sure to have his shadow following him; and so he that goes towards the sun of righteousness is sure to have afflictions following hard at his heels. It must be so; it is so ordered by him who hath done all things well. It is his wise decree, and it is intended to answer a wise end; and though you and I may not be able at present to see through it, yet what we know not now we shall know hereafter, if God and his word be true.

May Israel's God be with you in the furnace, and in his own good time bring you out to the honour and glory of his abounding grace, through the Son of his love. I will try and pray for you, my brother, that you may not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, and that you may have no heavier burden laid upon you, than you through grace shall be enabled to bear, to the praise of him who *does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.*

Let me hear from you again, soon, and then
you shall soon hear again

From your humble servant,

and

Well wisher in the Lord God of Israel.

J. O.

Baltimore, July, 1819.



LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

Grace and peace be multiplied unto thee.

I received your epistle some little time ago, and should have answered it before now but for the multiplicity of other things which I had to attend to. I am glad to hear that you are well, and still inquiring the way to Zion. May the angel of the covenant direct all your steps, keep you from evil, bless you with peace in your soul, lead you into truth, be with you in trouble, enlighten your mind, make you honest and upright, feed you with the true manna, and finally bring you to glory.

I hope you will never grow weary in well doing, but ever be kept waiting upon God in prayer and by reading his blessed word, for he

that waiteth upon the Lord glorifieth him. It is a good thing to know ourselves and God, aright; and though we may meet with many hard and difficult things by the way, yet a faithful God can and will bring us forth from them all in his own good time, to the honor of his free and amazing grace. God's people, in all ages of the world, have had many and great difficulties to encounter, and yet the Lord whom they served has found out a way to deliver; and the same gracious God will arise for our help in times of need, if we look to and put our trust in him. He is every thing to his saints that they need; yes, great is his goodness which he has laid up for them that fear and trust in him before the sons of men. "Trust in the Lord, therefore, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people." In these words we have God's love and tender care of his beloved ones set forth in strong language, which is a ground of encouragement for us to seek and to rely on him. None are so safe as those whom Israel's God makes safe, and none so blessed as those who are blessed by him. David says, "God is our refuge and strength." O blessed strength, and thrice

happy is he who by faith can realize it! In God we find, what we cannot find elsewhere, *a refuge* from the terrible blast of divine wrath, from the curse of a broken law, from the lashes of a griping conscience, and from the devouring flames.

The impetuous storm of divine wrath, fell with all its massy weight on the head of our Almighty Redeemer, and now a bright cloud, pregnant with mercy, is impendant over the head of every one who flies for refuge to a covenant God. The *strength* of the Lord God of Israel is also sufficient to sustain us when in the depth of trouble, to raise us up when down, to scatter our enemies, and to save our souls. O that this God may be our God for ever and ever, and our guide even unto death. Indeed, there is no safety but here; which being the case, seek after the Lord, my dear sir, and though faint, still pursue, and you will be winner at last if the Bible be true.

He that trusts in riches, will be deceived at last. He that seeks for happiness in this world, will be disappointed in the end. He that makes man his trust, will find himself a fool at the close of life. He that expects to go to heaven by his own good works, will find his mistake, when perhaps it is too late. And what next, "*He that trusteth in the Lord shall*

be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed."

Psa. cxxv. 1.

Write to me as soon as you can, pray for me at all times, excuse my not writing sooner, bear with my weakness, and believe me to be yours in love.

J. O.

Baltimore, August, 1820.

P. S. You want to know what sort of christians we have in Baltimore, and how we are going on. This is a strange question, as christians are all alike every where. However, if they are worse in one place than in another, I believe from my very soul it is in this city. They are mighty fond of novelty and new things. They pretend to be very wise, and real good judges in matters of religion; but I must needs say, if I am any judge, that I never found a people in all my travels in Europe, or America, more defective in those very points in which they are most insufferably conceited. In a word, they are a proud, ignorant, self-conceited people. They know every thing, and yet, in my judgment, they know nothing as they ought to know. I speak now of a large majority of professors of our own denomination, and not of every individual; for I trust here are some that love and fear God.

We, of late, have been trying hard to become great in the eyes of the nations round about us, and to cut a figure in this polite age, yet, we make but very little headway, for, as the sailors say, between you and me and the main-mast, our greatness in the strictest sense of the word, is but *dignity in rags*; but what we may arrive to at length, is not for me to say, as it is a long lane that hath no turn. We have got a new place of worship, or rather a Pantheon, and it sounds as musical as the whispering gallery in St. Paul's, London. Its cost is quite moderate for us great folks—fifty thousand dollars, I believe, is about what the temple stands us in; but who will be jack-pay-for-all God only knows.

We know, however, that the silver and the gold belong to the Lord, and we hope that he will not forsake us in the day of our calamity, but will enable us to keep up our *consequence* in the world, though we of ourselves, are too high to beg, and to dig we are ashamed. With respect to myself, I am scuffling about amongst the rest, but I am mortally hated by many, but why I am I cannot devise, unless it be because I preach the truth, for I mean nobody any harm. Perhaps, times will be better with us when I write again; and if they are I declare I'll let you know it, for I feel for our people in

the present case, but I cannot help them in money matters. All that I can do in the present distress, is to cry night and day to the Lord, that he may arise speedily for their help and not suffer their *ambition* to be shipwrecked. As I have a haughty spirit myself, a spirit of condolence ought to be manifested by me towards those whose consequence is suffering martyrdom between the upper and the nether mill-stone. And if the Lord would but rain down silver and gold as plentifully now as he formerly did manna, I declare I would see and scrape together as much as I could, in order to relieve my suffering brethren from a most painful anxiety, and, also, to establish my own reputation as a christian, for you know we are commanded *to overcome evil with good*. But, perhaps, you have not a turn for irony, I, therefore, will abandon the subject and once more bid you

Adieu.

I. O.

LETTER III.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER IN THE LORD,
Grace and peace be with you.

I received your letters on the 9th inst. and shall now answer them both in one.

I am truly glad to hear from you all. I feel a kind of nearness and a going out of heart to you, and am very anxious to see you all. But if I never should in this world, I hope I shall in a world to come, where we shall spend a long eternity together. What an unspeakable mercy it is for poor sinners like us to be raised to a comfortable hope of an interest in the Lord of life and glory. What were we better than others that God should display the riches of his grace and mercy in our salvation? We surely must attribute all to love, everlasting love.

And, as God has been pleased so eminently to designate us from the rest of the world—to pardon our sins, and to bless us with true peace, ought we not to believe, and also draw comfort from such a belief, that he will carry on the good work begun? What though we find many sins yet remaining within us, God says, “My grace is sufficient”—and this ought to

suffice us. What though we are often tempted by Satan, who is by far too strong for us, yet God says, "My grace is sufficient"—and this ought to suffice us. What though we at times sink very low, are much dismayed and discouraged because of the way, yet God says, "My grace is sufficient"—and this ought to suffice us. What though we have no strength of our own, nor wisdom enough to direct our way, yet God says, "My grace is sufficient"—and this ought to suffice us. What though we live in a world of sorrow, difficulties, and snares, yet God says, "My grace is sufficient;" and this ought to suffice us. What though we have to pass through deep waters and the furnace of affliction, yet God says, "My grace is sufficient;" and this ought to suffice us. What though our love to God waxeth cold, our thoughts, which ought to be fixed on heavenly objects, wandering far away from him, and our minds as dark as midnight, yet God is the same, his love is the same, his mercy is the same, and his grace all sufficient still. And it is well for us that these things are even so; for if they were not, what would become of us, who are not able to manage our own affairs?

But, seeing these things are so, what manner of persons ought we to be in all godly conversation? How should we try to serve him,

obey him, love him, honour him, worship him, and adore him, with all our hearts! As the God of Israel has already done such great things for a part of your family, so I hope and wish that he may still be mindful of the rest of them; and, in his good time, call them by his grace, and bring them to know and fear his great name.

What a pleasing sight it must be, to see a whole family serving and fearing God! But how very seldom this is the case; and yet we know it is in the power of God to cause such a thing to take place. If God can save one, he can save two, and if two, he can save three; yes, all. And as this is in his power, we, who are already called by his grace, ought to entreat him to make bare his holy arm in saving poor sinners. I hope, my dear friends, you will seek the Lord with mind and heart, and put your whole trust and confidence in him, and in him only. I hope also that you may enjoy much of his presence; live near to him, and before him walk humbly all your days. As there is nothing in this world that can satisfy the boundless desires of an immortal mind, we ought to look to that source from whence cometh every good and perfect gift, and from whence all the pressing wants of God's dear children have been supplied in all ages of the

world. We hear of no failure here, no defects here, no want of power or will here, to save those who come unto him for life and salvation. "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," is the language of Jesus. Blessed Jesus! Dear Redeemer! Willing Saviour! Is it so, that Christ will cast out none that come unto him? Yes, it is even so! O that we may all come to Jesus, who is able to save to the uttermost.

Give my love to all the family and christian friends, and tell them, that although we are five hundred miles apart, I hope to see them at some future time, and to preach unto them a precious Jesus. Write soon, and let me know how you are all going on. My beloved wife and children are all well through mercy. I am in good health myself.

Adieu.

J. O.

Baltimore city, 1820.

LETTER IV.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I heard yesterday, through the medium of sister H. of what hath lately befallen you. I feel a spirit of condolence for you, knowing what a gloom must now becloud your minds. But all is right, and you know it. Act accordingly. I hope this painful visitation will be sanctified by the Lord of Hosts to the good of your souls, and especially, to the good of your son, on whom the present shock principally rests.

God has seen fit to mark all things here below with mortality, from whence we ought to learn not to place too great a confidence in surrounding objects. That we are all mortal and bound for a long eternal home, is a very serious thought; but that which is the most alarming of all is, we are sinners, which being the case, we, of course, are amenable to that law which is fraught with malediction. This being the case what an unspeakable mercy it is to be raised to a comfortable hope of an interest in him who *bore our sins in his own body on the*

tree. And this hope, some of you are through grace, in possession of, and I wish you all were.

Tell your son L—— from me, that I feel for him, and wish that this loud call from God may rouse him to a deep sense of his real state and standing before a heart searching God, and that he may be induced to seek after him from a sense of his present danger. In Jesus he will find a friend, a real friend, a friend that loveth at all times, and who will never leave him, but stand by him in sickness, in health, in life, and in death, and at last transmit him into that abode, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

In the person, character, and offices of Christ, he will find his present loss amply made up, with large interest, for he is one who sticketh closer than a brother, or even a *wife*; and his love is like himself, always the same, and burns like a perpetual fire. And this love, when it is felt, warms the heart, draws forth the affections to our heavenly Lover, and endears him to us, so that we esteem him our best friend, our husband, and our God. It also enriches the soul, and fills it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It weans the mind from this world, and fills it with holy longings and desires after a better one to come. It draws

the soul to a throne of grace, and to a close searching into the precious Bible, where may be found mines of gold, yea what is better than even fine gold, life and peace. It also beautifies the mind, and qualifies it for mental discourse with God here, and for the full enjoyment of him above.

Who then would not possess this love, and be on friendly terms with the Most High? Dear L——, seek after this Jesus till you find him, and when you have found him, let me know it, that we may rejoice together in God our Saviour.

Dear friends, may the Lord bless you and do you good, and be with you under all your afflictions. Tender my love to all friends, and among the rest to your whole family; to brother S. and family, and to sister T. and her family. I wrote to you about three months ago, but have received no answer. I thought rather hard of it at first, and do still; but perhaps you never got it. I long to see you all once more, but when I shall I know not. We are all well. The Lord be praised. I am in a hurry. You know I am always busy. Sister H. and the little ones are well.

Adieu.

J. O.

Baltimore, 1821.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

Grace and Peace be with thee.

After being absent from home twelve weeks, I, through the good hand of God upon me, arrived in this city on the evening of the fifth instant, where I found a number of letters which I have had to answer; among the rest I found one from you, which I have read over and over. Every letter I receive from you, creates in me a greater anxiety to see you; I want very much to feel your pulse, so as to be able to find out the real state of your *system*.

I do assure you, I am very apprehensive that you are in part poisoned, (unperceived by you however,) owing, I think, to feeding too much on the wild commons, where the herbage is naturally *short* and *sour*, and where there are many noxious weeds also, which, if they are eaten, will much affect the *system*. All the senses are also affected by it—the taste becomes vitiated—the feelings callous—the hearing indistinct—the eyes dim—and the smell so changed, that one cannot say, *The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with tender grapes give a good smell*. When I meet

a person thus defective, he appears to me somewhat like a *bastard Jew*, for he can neither speak *Hebrew* nor *Ashdod* plain; I therefore am bound to send all such persons to the *Law of Liberty*, James, i. 25, where they will find the God of Israel, whose prerogative it is to remove the veil from the mind, as we read, "When it (or they) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *liberty*." 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

It is a blessed thing, dear sir, to be *permitted* to look into this *perfect law of liberty*: I say, to be *permitted*, for none can look into it but by *permission*, yes, and *DIVINE permission* too, and none but sons are thus privileged. Carnal men, hypocrites, nominal professors, and blind priests, know no more about this law, excepting in name only, than I know about the dimensions of the sun. We are informed that the secret of the Lord is with them that *fear* him, (mark that, *fear* him,) and he will shew them his covenant. See Psalm xxv.

Now the plain English of it is just this: he that fears and loves God is let into the secret, or brought to know and to partake of the blessings of the covenant of grace, which covenant is of ancient date, made between the Father and the Son, and is ordered in all things and sure; i. e. -sure to answer the end which was

designed, to wit; to secure, hold fast, and bring to glory, all the vessels of mercy who were chosen in this covenant before time began; or in other words, all those for whom Christ the head of this covenant died. Is the above statement true or false? Let Paul answer. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Well done Paul!!

And now we will hear what Mr. B. says, "Christ died for all and every man, but the benefits of his death are applied to a very few; therefore, all for whom he died will not be saved."

A sorry ditty this. And I am so far from thinking that Paul ever once harped on so wild a note as the above, that I make no doubt but he would, if he was here, say of this error, as Jehu said of Jezebel, "Go see now this cursed woman, and bury her." 2 Kings, ix. 34. Nothing, dear sir, but pure truth will be able to stand the scrutiny of the unerring word of God in the great day of accounts. Error, superstition, will-worship, and all the vain imaginations of men, will, in that day, fall like lightning from the sky, while truth and justice will be *established in the very heavens*. The idea of the atonement being *general*, but *spe-*

cial in its application, is the quintessence of popery, and the chief corner stone on which the corrupt *system* of Arminianism is reared. On this base, or rather phantom, old Pelagius, Arminius, Episcopus, and all the sons of Belial in christendom, built their fabric. And what is it? Nothing more, nor nothing less, than the *religion of nature*. And it is what carnal men are pleased with, although it stands in direct opposition to the religion of the Bible.

Now, from such an error as this, from such blindness of mind, from such hardness of heart, and such contempt of God's word, *good Lord deliver me!*

I am aware how very plausible and pleasing to the human mind the above error is. But error is not to be tried at the petty court of *carnal reason*—treated as we treat a petty larceny, nor yet decided on by a synod of blind ecclesiastics, though they may have attached to their names, A. M. or D. D. but at a much higher court, errors of every sort and kind, must and will be tried, and the Bible the rule by which they will be squared; and whatever is found to lay square with this rule will pass current in heaven, and nothing else as God liveth!

It may be, you will say, that it is unreasonable to suppose that Christ should die for some

few and not for all, as it would not only *look* like partiality on the part of our glorious sufferer, but it would actually be so, according to the nature of things; and to attribute partiality to so just a person would be a gross insult indeed.

Yes sir, it would be an affront offered to the God of Israel, to charge him with injustice in any one thing whatever. But I think it would be much more unreasonable, (*as well as altogether unscriptural,*) to suppose that Christ died for *all* men indiscriminately, and yet but a part of this *all* saved, seeing by this very thing, the atonement made, is invalidated and rendered *entirely nugatory*; because if it fails in answering the end designed to the *fullest extent*, it can answer no end at all, for it is defective, as is evident by its not answering *every* purpose intended.

Again—it is more, sir, by far, than you or any other person can prove from the word of God, that the death of Christ was ever intended for all and every man. And if it was, how comes it to pass that his death is not alike beneficial to all and every one for whom it was intended, which it is not, if all and every one are not saved? I will now lay before you another difficulty on this head, which is as follows:

It is impossible to separate the death of Christ from the fruits and effects flowing from it; and this being the case, all for whom he died will necessarily receive the fruits and effects resulting from his death.

Once more—if the atonement be *universal*, some other things must be *universal* also, in order to keep up the harmony in the economy of grace. As thus, God's love must be *universal*, i. e. God must love all men alike, the same as the atonement, (as some say,) was for all men alike, for we are *bound* to believe that the one is of the same extent as the other. Now, then, if Christ died for more than will be saved, it follows from the above premises, that God loved, and still loves more than will be saved; and as his love is unalienable, he, of course, must love those who perish, as well as those who are saved. Deny this if you can.

Again—if the atonement be *universal*, so must the intercession of Christ, now in heaven, also be *universal*, since we are *bound* to believe that the one is of the same extent as the other; and this being the case, it follows, in course, that if one perisheth for whom Christ died, one must perish for whom he now intercedes. And if it be so, and it lies with you to prove that it is not, I cannot see how any one can be saved, seeing by the above rule, Christ

is defective in his intercession; i. e. he pleads with his Father for all and every man but he cannot prevail; and how in the name of common sense can he prevail with his Father for any *one* if he cannot or does not for all?

But again—if the atonement be *universal*, the office work of the Holy Ghost is of *universal* extent also, for we are *bound* to believe that the one is as wide as the other, i. e. all for whom Christ died, the Spirit is to make meet for heaven; and this being the case, it follows of pure necessity, that if all are not saved for whom Christ died, the Spirit must be defeated, for his work was to gather together and to make meet for glory, all and every one for whom Christ died; but, inasmuch as all are not saved for whom he died, the Holy Spirit as I said before, must be defeated; which being the case I do not see how any one can be saved. But this, sir, is wretched work indeed! If I was writing a book on this subject, I should, in course, be a little more particular in the points which I have laid down; but as I am not, I have been very superficial; but crude and superficial as they all are, I wish that you, my son, would think them over a little; compare what I have said with the Word of God; put the above few points together; balance them with the doctrine of *universal* atonement, and then let me hear

from you again. And do inform me how you are, where you are, and what you are doing.

First, whether you are well or sick; strong or weak; whole or maimed; in the midst of health or sore broken in the place of Dragons; rejoicing or mourning; lifted up, or cast down, &c.

Second, whether you are on the mount, or in the valley; in a fruitful field, or in a dreary forest; in a wealthy place, or in a land of want; in a straight path, or in a crooked way; in the sun shine, or under a cloud; in prison, or walking at large; in the hands of God, or in the hands of men, &c.

Thirdly, whether you are waging war with Satan, the world, and sin, or at ease in Zion; running the race set before you, or standing still; seeking after God and godliness, or wordly fame and greatness; pressing onwards to Zion, or on the point of going back; calling on God in prayer, or neglecting the means by which we draw nigh to God; reading the Bible and other good books, or reading novels and newspapers; keeping company with the men of the world, (needlessly,) or with the people of God, &c. &c. And now, in going on with my rigmarole, permit me to ask you a few questions, such as: Do you at times feel a secret pleasure in reading the word of God? And is it a matter of grief to you that this in-

ward pleasure is not greater and more lasting? Again—do you wish and pray for more enlarged views of truth, and that God would open up more fully to you the mysteries of the cross of Jesus, and make known more clearly his mind and will concerning you?

Again—do you find at times a conflict in your mind, a sort of strife or struggle, like two armies contending? If this be the case, you may say as a good woman once said on a certain occasion, namely, “If it be so, (that is, if she was barren,) why am I thus?” And she went to inquire of the Lord, and the Lord told her that two nations were in her womb instead of being barren; and so it turned out, for she brought forth two sons, who in temper and disposition, differed one from the other, as much as the above two armies. And one of these boys we are told, God *loved*, and the other he *hated*, see Gen. 25th. Now I say, if it be with you as above, you may go to God and inquire of him thus, “If I am barren of all that is good, of divine life in my soul, of love to thee, of love to thy word, to thy truth, to thy ways, and to thy people, why, O God, why am I thus? Why this sad conflict in my mind?” I now, as mouth for God, will answer you my son. No, you are not barren, so far from this, that there are in you two distinct nations, or two distinct na-

tures, and because they differ very widely one from the other, you therefore will feel this conflict in your mind.

The most correct way of distinguishing these two guests, is to call one, *human nature*, and the other the *divine nature*. As the former was born after the flesh, in course there is nothing about him but adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling and such like. Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. He also hates the latter with a perfect hatred, and persecutes him with most insatiable cruelty and rage, although inmates together. But though they are inmates together, yet they are as opposite to each other, both with respect to their origin, their manner of being brought up, their conduct in life, their dispositions, their views of truth, their choice of things and their end in all, as blazing noon and midnight darkness. This first born, Esau, has caused the saints of God in all ages of world many a groan, many a sigh, many a tear, and many a restless hour. And as God hated this child of the flesh, this Esau, so do they. And not only so, but Esau hates God and every child of God; yea, and every principle of grace implanted in their souls, and hence he is

determined to withstand the whole of them though it cost him his life. He is a daring, bold, adventurous, impudent, proud, overbearing, and insolent villain. He is *human nature* every inch of him; and that which is bred in the bone will never be out of the flesh. He is continually teasing, tormenting, worrying, and chasing the saints of God; just like a bumbailiff after a poor debtor. Now although this be his true and real character, yet strange to tell, there positively are men in the world, (falsely called gospel preachers,) blind and ignorant enough to speak and write somewhat in favour of this first born. Yea, they have audacity enough to attest, that he is not, whether considered in his original form, or in his now standing condition, so bad, so deformed, so vile, so helpless, so opposed to all that is good, so destitute of will and power, so blind, so dead, as to be without feeling, so ignorant and so totally depraved, as some men imagine. And as they are under this impression, they pass, in an oblique manner, if not directly, many encomiums on poor *human nature*; no doubt but the devil laughs at them for so doing, for he knows more about human nature than do these blind buzzards. It is owing to their ignorance of this subject that they treat it in the manner they do. They hold out an idea that Esau is *sick*,

but not *dead*; and hence they foolishly speak of his having *power* sufficient to do great feats, if he had but the *will* only. If he had the *will* in addition to what he has got, they would wish to make us believe that he would be as though he had not been, i. e. as though he had not been any way injured by the fall. However, as it cannot be thought that blind men can be good judges of color, neither can it be expected that carnal men can be capable of giving a proper definition, either of the object of God's hatred or the object of his love, that is, of Esau or of Jacob, or in other words, of the *old man*, or of the *new*. Those objects are spiritually discerned, and none but spiritual men can see them aright.

Every soul that is made alive by the grace of God, can see clear enough that *human nature* is not in *part* only, but *totally* depraved; and that the *old man*, Esau-like, is averse to God, an enemy to God, continually opposing God, and for ever warring against the Spirit, or the *new man*, which is formed in the soul by the power of God. And this *old man*, as Paul hath it, looks as disdainful and as envious on the *new man* of grace, as ever Esau did on Jacob. But though Esau hated his brother; yet we find God's *love* was drawn out towards one, and his *hatred* towards the other. And so in the case

before us, the *old man of sin* God *hates*, though he is the elder; and the *new man of grace* God *loves*, though he is the younger. Now as good Rebecca, as soon as she found these two boys struggling in her womb, carried her case to the Lord, and said, "If it be so," i. e. if I am barren, "why am I thus?" So, my son, should you. Do you, I ask again, find a conflict in your mind? If so, there must be life in your soul, or, otherwise you would not find this struggle, or in other words, if you were barren of all that is good, you would not feel thus; therefore, do not be discouraged, my son. Neither be discouraged, because there are so many bad qualities belonging to *human nature*, for the *elder shall serve the younger*. And as I have said a few things relative to the *old man of sin*, I will lay before you some few particulars concerning the *new man of grace*.

"The old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," is, notwithstanding his being the eldest, and wishing so much to usurp authority over the younger, is, I say, to be *put off*, to be nothing counted of, to be treated with coolness, and to be made to *serve the younger*. And so it ought to be, since the younger is of far more noble blood, better bred, of better character, and much more capable of ruling, as he

evidently is by the account given of him, which is as follows:

The new man is after God; here is his parentage and high birth set forth unto us—*created in righteousness and true holiness*—here is the purity of his nature set forth. Now with respect to his *capability* of ruling, it is said of him, *He is renewed in KNOWLEDGE, after the image of him that created him*. And this knowledge, or wisdom, which is from above, is said to be “pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” James, iii. 17.

Now does it not appear from all this, that the new man, though the youngest, ought to take the lead? And ought he not to maintain his right and hold fast his claim, in spite of all the objections which that old usurper, Esau, may alledge against it? Yes, he does, and I doubt not but God will defend him in it, and enable him to stand his ground; for this is the Jacob or the *new man*, whom he *loveth*. And now, sir, that you may know who to applaud, and to speak well of to your friends and neighbours, and who to hold in disrepute, and to charge with folly, I will show you in a more particular manner what springs from these two *natures* which are struggling within you, and in doing

this, I shall have to resume my former manner, namely, of asking you questions.

Do you at times, feel so humble and contrite that you are willing to take the lowest room; to put your hand upon your mouth and your mouth in the dust; to take shame to yourself, and to give God all the glory and praise for what he hath done for you a poor sinner? If so, it is a proof, a convincing proof, that the *new man* is formed in your heart; therefore ascribe all to grace, free grace, unmerited grace!

Again—are you at times, so taken with, and overcome by the many charms that are in Jesus, our precious *Rose of Sharon*, that you are willing to follow him whithersoever he goeth, and to live and die at his feet, though you should suffer the loss of all things here for so doing? If so, it is well, for most assuredly this is a trait of the *new man*; therefore, place the whole of it under the head of grace, amazing grace!

Again—do you at times, feel an inward loathing of yourself on account of the many evils there yet are lurking in your breast, and at the same time find a very great hatred to sin and to the ways of wicked men? If you indeed and in truth feel thus, I cannot account for it in any other way, than as above; for how a

man can hate, detest, and fly from that which is elementary to him I cannot devise. I conclude, therefore, that if your feelings are as above, they must spring from something above nature, and I hope you will place them under the head of grace, even sovereign grace!

Again—do you at times, feel as if you were willing to become any thing, so that God might be all in all, and have the praise and glory of your soul's salvation, through time and endless eternity? If these also are your feelings, I dare to aver that they flow from a living principle in your soul called the *new man*; therefore, place all such feelings under the head of grace, matchless grace!

Again—is your heart at times dissolved in thankfulness to Almighty God for his abundant goodness manifested to your rebellious soul, your eyes melted to tears under a sense of the mercy you have found in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your mind absorbed in holy meditation on the ineffable glory of the world above? If so, it is well, for these things certainly belong to the *new man*, and you ought to place them under the head of grace, redeeming grace!

Again—when Jesus absents himself and long delays his coming, is it afflicting and very painful to your soul? Do you go in search of him, and mourn because you cannot find him? Is

the Bible your resort, the throne of grace your resort, and the house of God your resort in those days? Do you hunger and thirst, pant and long for his return? Do you think every *day* of his absence a week; look for him with intense desire and great anxiety of mind; seek him oft with an aching heart and throbbing breast, and appear all day long like one deserted by his friend? Can you say when Jesus is thus away, that there is no one thing among all the good things of this world that can satisfy the boundless desires of your immortal soul? If you can say so, and if you feel so, it looks as if you were not barren, or destitute of divine life, for these things never grew, nor never will grow in nature's garden; therefore place all under the head of grace, amazing grace!

Again—whenever you are suffered to make a private slip, and thereby contract guilt on your conscience, do you not find a very great bustle and tumult within? Do you not *try, judge,* and *condemn* yourself; and also wonder much that God does not *condemn* you too? Do you not rue your folly and weakness—beg pardon of an offended God—confess your sin—pray for grace to help in time of need, and for the Lord to keep you in the day of temptation, for the future? If this be the case, it must be that there are two natures in you, one is Esau,

whom God *hates*, and the other is Jacob, whom God *loves*. And these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would, and because you cannot, you are grieved in heart, and are ready to judge yourself barren.

Again—do you feel a very warm attachment to the household of faith, to God and to his ways, love to converse on spiritual subjects, to hear the gospel preached, and to be found in the sanctuary of God? Do you wish for the prosperity of Jerusalem, pray for her welfare, rejoice when she is enlarged, and esteem her above your chief joy? If so, place the whole of it under the head of grace, unmerited grace?

Again—do you sometimes secrete yourself from a noisy and busy world, and read your Bible where none can see you but God—drop a silent tear over the same,—weep over an injured, a slighted, an insulted, a much abused, and yet a compassionate Saviour? Do you then and there bend the knee and lift up your hands, eyes, and heart to a righteous God, and implore divine aid, return thanks for mercies received, and beseech him to enable you to trust him for all that is to come? This is delightful employment indeed, and it is the work of the *new man*, and we ought often to be found engaged in it. And what shall I more say? for

the time would *fail me*, and perhaps tire you, to tell of all the good things, pleasant fruits, choice clusters, divine sayings, pious breathings, &c. put forth from time to time by the *new man* or *new creature*, as Paul in another place hath it. We will, therefore, attend to the *old man*, and try to find out what he delights in. His *birth*, we have before proved, to be of the *flesh*, and this being the case with him, we cannot expect to find any thing in him, or to hear of any thing done by him, that is praise worthy. But we will give him a fair trial, and the following shall be the manner of our proceeding with him at this time.

When at any time you would do good and serve God acceptably and offer up unto him a tribute of praise, which you consider to be his due, are you interrupted, by having many difficulties laid in your way, and many queries presented to your mind, respecting the necessity of these things being attended to, on which account they are often neglected by you? If so, you may take it for granted, that the *old man* is at the bottom of it all. "When I would do good, evil is present with me," says Paul.

Again—do you at times, when reading the Bible, and when before God in prayer, find your thoughts to wander far away from the Bi-

ble, from prayer, and from God, and you thereby much dismayed, confused, and so grieved in spirit, that you are just ready to conclude it is all in vain that you read the Bible, and call upon God in prayer? if this be the case with you, I would advise you to place the greatest part, if not the whole of this mischief, to the *old man*, or in other words, *to the law of sin, which is in your members*.

Again—do you sometimes feel cold, torpid, and supine, and religion appear a poor insipid thing, scarcely worth your attention? and at such times, is not the world and the things of it very much before your eyes and on your mind, yea, so much so, that they are not far from being all in all with you? If you have, at any time, feelings like these, you may thank the devil and the *old man* for them, if you think them worth it; for these two are colleagues, and have been, I believe, for near six thousand years. What one purposes, the other sanctions; and thus they go on, hand and glove together, persecuting the *new man* of the heart, which is *born of God*.

Again—is not your heart at times considerably uplifted and carried away with fantastical notions about human greatness, as though it was a thing of such worth as ought to be attended to? And do you not, from a beginning

like this, become self important and self conceited, and appear in your own eyes bigger by one half than what you really are? And are you not at such times, ready secretly to think religion almost beneath your notice, and that to become great and respectable in the world you must soar into an atmosphere above religion? This, as Paul says, is being *rainly puffed up by the fleshy mind*. And this puffed up complaint operates on the soul, as an abscess does on the body; and, is indeed, far more pernicious and dangerous, as it *so* very sensibly affects the intellects, that the patient often in the height of the disorder, fancies himself to be what in truth he is not; and when he comes to himself a little, so as in a measure to see through the cheat, the nature of the disorder is such, that he feels mortified because he is not so great as he wishes to be. If you, sir, have been in this snare and have trod this path, you may safely venture to place the whole account to the Devil and *depraved nature*, who, as I said before, always go in co.

Again—all rebellious thoughts, blasphemous thoughts, obscene thoughts, despairing thoughts, worldly thoughts; together with a thousand other things contrary to sound doctrine, and to the *new man*, are brought forth by this Esau, this child of the flesh, through the Devil's

working upon it. And all the time things go on in this way, you will, if you are a christian, find a conflict and a warfare in your mind, for, as Paul says, “the flesh lusteth (or warreth) against the *spirit*, and the spirit against the *flesh*, and these two, (i. e. the old man and the new,) are contrary the one to the other,” and I wish you may have discernment enough to distinguish them and to give each one his due.

We may say of the *old man*, and of the *new*, as Paul says in another case, “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.” And it is with this *new principle* of grace in our souls, that we serve God acceptably; and if we are destitute of this *divine principle*, all our service is but *bodily exercise*, which Paul says *profiteth little*. Nay more, if we are not partakers of the *divine nature*, as Peter speaks, all our attainments, abilities, light, sanctity, zeal, liberality, and our pretended love, joy, peace, faith, hope, and humility, will go out, or die like a torch at noon, and leave us the *worst of fools*.

Whereas, on the other hand, if we are made partakers of the free grace of God, though this grace may be opposed by the *old man* of sin, and the warfare kept up through life, though we at times are much put to it for arms and ammunition, and, on some occasions, are just rea-

dy to turn back in the day of battle, yet, through God who is on our side, we shall assuredly be saved in the *day of his power*.

Oh! that we may, from these considerations, closely examine ourselves whether we are in the faith or not. If we are, it is well for us; but if we are not, it will be ill with us. It is a *great* as well as a good thing to be a christian; and it consists in something more than outside appearance. It consists in a radical change of heart, and that change effected by almighty power. If we have undergone this change, we are born of God, and shall never come into condemnation, for he that hath begotten us again to a lively hope, will never leave, but will be with us to the end of our journey, and then present us spotless before his throne, where we shall chant his high praises for ever.

But I observe again—where these two opposites dwell, I mean *nature* and *grace*, there will, of course, be a strife in the mind, which strife, or struggle, is often productive of great anguish of soul, and such painful forebodings, that the christian often wonders how it can be, that he is a child of God, and yet feel such ebblings and flowings, such wars and tumults within. Yes, the twins struggling within him, make him cry out, in the bitterness of his soul, and under sad fears of his heart's being barren

of all that is good, "Why am I thus?" Now I say again, my son, that if it be thus with you, it is truly a good sign that the good work of grace is begun in your soul; and as to the strife within you, be not dismayed at it. We all know that fire and water will oppose each other on the same *hearth*, and so will grace and corruption in the same *heart*. A christian hath an universal strife within himself, for reason against reason, judgment against judgment, will against will, and affection against affection, will be at variance, even if we do our best. And if you are observant of the exercises of your mind, and watchful of what is going on within your breast, you will always find, that the destruction of the *old man*, is the life of the *new*; and, whenever the former increases in strength and boldness, the latter will decrease in strength and become inactive. And when this is the case, you will be filled with doubts, fears, and strong suspicion, respecting the goodness or the safty of your state and standing before a heart-searching God; and will write, it is likely, many bitter things against yourself, and perhaps against God too; all which tend very much to strengthen the former and to weaken the latter. And as you will sensibly feel these things and feel your own leanness and wretchedness, you will be ready to conclude that you

are a stranger to grace, and in the dark about divine things, ignorant of God, and in the gall of bitterness. Now all this arises from "the flesh lusting against the spirit;" or the *old man* being opposed to the *new*.

And, inasmuch as he is seditious, contentious, a traitor, a rebel against God; and that the loyal subjects of the Great King cannot live in peace where he is, *I, James Osbourn, a peace officer under the King of kings, do, on this twenty-fifth day of the first month, in the year of our blessed Lord eighteen hundred and twenty-one, imperiously authorize you, my son, to put into full force against the aforesaid OLD MAN, alias HUMAN NATURE, a statute law, enacted in the year of the world two thousand five hundred and fifty-two, which runs thus, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and unto the gate of his place, and they shall say unto the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so*

shalt thou put evil away from among you, and all Israel shall hear, and fear." Deut. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21. And which law was revised in the year of our Lord fifty-eight, and in substance recorded thus, "Crucify the old man with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24.

And now, that you may attend to your duty in a prudent and christian like manner, I will lay before you a few directions how you are to proceed; and I wish you may prove successful, but I very much doubt whether you will or not.

1. Be continually casting stones at him, lay hands on him, discountenance him, rail against him, wage war with him, raise mounts against him, expose him to the elders of the city, i. e. tell of his tricks to the ministers of the gospel, and get them to preach against him, or, in other words, to cast stones at him, and thereby maim him most cruelly.

2. Hunt him as Saul hunted David; worry him night and day, and never give up the chase till you have brought him to yield—cut this Ishmael off with a shilling, and pay all possible attention to Isaac the *new man*;—Nail this old Barabbas to the cross, so that Jesus the babe may be spared.

3. Do with him as Christ did with the money changers, i. e. drive him out of the tem-

ple, pronounce a woe on him, make intercession against him, build against him with hewn stones; mock him, way-lay him, hiss at him, turn him out of the camp and quarter him at the cross roads, where the lepers used to be made to stand; serve him with a writ of error, take him by the throat, clap him in prison, make his feet fast in the stocks, put him on jail allowance, and pray that he may die there.

4. Serve him as his accomplices served our Lord, namely, smite him on the head, spit in his face, stab him in the side, gargle his throat with gall and vinegar; make it your chief study and daily care to crucify him with all his affections and lusts; yea, as we say, beat him black and blue, for it is no breach of law so to do.

5. Pluck out his eyes, as the Philistines did Sampson's, shave off his hair and so take away his strength. Oblige him to keep a perpetual fast, to creep on his belly, as the serpent does, that he may thereby fall into an incurable consumption, and so lose his activity and influence. Stop his ears, as Stephen's auditors did theirs; and with David, curb him with a bitt; or as Agabus served Paul, bind him hand and foot with a girdle, so that he may not

move, peep, listen, nor whisper in your breast any more for ever.

6. Endeavor to strangle all his ill motions in the porch of life, that none of them may have a timely birth. We all know very well, not only from the word of God, but from experience also, that he *lusteth to envy*; and if his *lust conceives*, he will labour day and night to bring forth *all manner of concupiscence*; it lays with you therefore, to try to check the growth, yea, to prevent the birth of such a progeny as this.

7. Bray this old fool in a mortar, trample him under foot, pulverize him to powder. And if you fail in this, try and deal with him as Samuel dealt with Agag, hew him in pieces before the Lord; or, as was done to the Levite's concubine, force him to death, cut him in twelve pieces and send them into all the coast of Israel, and God shall commend you for so doing.

8. Now if you should prove unsuccessful in these things, and he will yet be contentious, a breaker of your peace, and a rebel against God, this do, make him a *mendicant*, give him a pass to beg all his days; or make him live like a monk of the *order of idleness*; or thus, may it please your honor to consecrate him to Baal; permit him to be his priest, that he

may lance his putrified flesh, and at last, he, Judas like, become his own executioner.

Do all this, my son, or at least make the attempt, for none but the devil and wicked men will mourn at his death, or attempt to raise him up again. And when this Saul is dead, then young David shall grow stronger and stronger, and his kingdom be a peacable one; and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts." Zech. xiv. 21. And, I am verily persuaded, my son, that if you can bring to a close the life of this *old man*, his death will be congratulated by all the household of faith, and perhaps your name immortalized into the bargain; for ever since he first made his appearance in this our universe, he has been a very great pest and torment to all the loyal subjects of the King of kings, whether they have resided in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, or elsewhere; and by the said subjects, he has been way-laid, spoken against, hooted at, pursued, taken, imprisoned, cited at the bar, tried and condemned a thousand times twice told, and as often escaped death; and hence he is now considered and generally known as one outlawed. And, therefore, if you can so lay hold on him, as to bereave him of life, you shall be more renown-

ed in the streets of Zion than was the stripling David in the Hebrew camp for taking off the head of Goliath of Gath. Did Goliath defy the armies of the living God? and make his boast of what he could and would do? He did. But what has this *old man* done? or rather what has he not done? He has, times out of number, impiously defied God, rebelled against God, charged God foolishly, disquieted the household of faith, and has caused and still is causing great uneasiness in the minds of the weaklings in faith. Yea, more, he has publicly declared a perpetual war against all that is lovely and good, and is determined to stand it out so long as his name stands for what it does.

Most men as they get old, become feeble and inactive; but not so with this *old man*; his eye is not yet dim, in one sense of the word, and yet in another, he is as blind as a bat; nor is his natural force or strength abated. His strength and influence has been and still is such that he often makes the most valiant men in Israel to groan, to cry out, to mourn sore like doves, to tremble, to fear, to limp as they go, and to hang down their heads like bullrushes.

He made one of these brave men say, "I am ready to halt;" another, "I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh;" another, "I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am

deprived of the residue of my years;" another, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born;" another, "O Lord, take, I beseech thee my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live;" another, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" and another, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Psa. xxviii. 17. Job. xxi. 6. Isa. xxxviii. 10. Jer. xx. 14. Jonah, iv. 3. Luke. v. 8. Rom. vii. 24. The above sayings will give you, my son, some idea of what this *old man* can do; and you may rely on it, that he is hated by all good men in christendom.

But you, perhaps, are anxious to know whether something cannot be done in this case, or whether there is not something on foot already, only in a great measure hid from you; for if the continuation of such outrageous offences and unparalleled depredations as are still like to be perpetrated by him, is to depend on what you can do towards bringing him to condign punishment, the dear saints of God throughout the world, can have but little else to expect, than that of continual war and bloodshed. I am right glad, my son, that you are so much concerned about this business, and can sympathise with the household of faith. But I must tell

you, there is something on foot already concerning this thing, and it is, in brief, this:

The *new man*, who always takes a decided stand in favour of the Lord and all his disciples, has accepted the *old man's* challenge—has become his competitor—made several very bold attacks upon him—declared himself independent, invincible, and from God. And though it be true that the *old man* is the first born, yet I am pretty certain, that I have seen in print some where, and that not long ago, these very words, “The elder shall serve the younger.” If this be true, and I am confident in my own mind it is, it is easy to see, that the *old man* is in a state of slavery, notwithstanding the great splutter he is making of what he can and will do, and that a complete victory on the part of the *new man*, will be the final issue of the contest. The *old man* must die for the *new*; for “grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life.” The *new man* being from above, and receiving continual supplies from God, he will always be able to recover his standing, admitting he is made to retreat now and then. Many partial victories are gained by the first born, and it is this that keeps him in such high spirits, but HE who sees the end from the beginning, knows how it will terminate; and he will defend and support the

new man in his cause; for the war is a holy one, and God, who is holy, will vindicate his own interest.

But I must confess, it makes one's life very unpleasant at times, to be thus pestered with this body of sin, even though we may, and do, hope it will all end well with us. The *new man* being free born, and of a peaceable disposition, he, in course, is fond of peace, and he knows where it is to be found, even in him who gave him birth. And freedom also he is as fond of, that being his natural element; and for it he will contend, for he would rather contend, though contrary to the bent of his mind, than to give up his liberty and right. I myself have known the contest between these two opponents to be so strong, and the victory, as I have thought, so precarious, that to save my life, I could not tell how it would terminate. And I have always observed, that the sharpest encounters have happened in the night, so that I have not been able to say who was on the Lord's side or who was not, until the morning light. I have suffered amazingly on this head, perhaps more than many.

I have halted, staggered, swooned, fell down, cried out, mourned, groaned, wrung my hands, called for aid, and struggled, as though in the agonies of death. I have, on such occasions,

been made so sore, tender, and feeble, that I have gone limping and hanging down my head for weeks together.

But, blessed be God, I have, on the other hand, had some most comfortable seasons. The *new man* has been lively, fresh and green, and has evidently ruled and reigned with authority; at which time the *old man* has skulked off, and I have viewed him in all his deformity, and as one of the greatest usurpers in the world, and have been pained at my heart to hear men speak in his favour. Yes, I have, at such times, viewed him an enemy to truth, a foe to free and sovereign grace, a rebel against God, averse to all that is good, blind to spiritual things, too wild to be tamed, too bad to be made better, too proud to yield, too self-willed to be ruled, wholly carnal, totally depraved, quite earthly, sensual, and devilish.

I have tried to make him better; I have tried to bear with him; and, indeed, I must bear with him, for what cannot be cured, must be endured. I have tried to put the best construction on him and his ways that I could, and to make every allowance for him, and yet by closely watching him, and by judging impartially, I find him to be a juggler. and continually *lusting to envy*. But a better description, perhaps, never was given of him, than the one

given by Paul, thus, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Eph. iv. 22. I know very well, both by observation and experience, that he is in alliance with Satan and all wicked men, and with them he is daily plotting against the just, trying to make void the counsels of God, and devising schemes to dethrone the *new man*. I know, moreover, there are but few professors acquainted with him and his deceitful workings; and of preachers fewer yet, that know any thing of him, any more than by name, or that can describe him and his ways, excepting with mere cant terms, owing to their being destitute of the *new man*, by which we come at a right knowledge of the former.

In the heart where the *new man* is not formed, the *old man* is *all in all*, and whatever he does or dictates to be done, is law. And hence, if a person wishes to become religious, the old tenant has no objection to it, so that it is but a mere nominal thing. If he can but rule, it is all he wants; he had as leave be at the head of a religious party as to preside over a banditti. It is rivalry that he hates and is determined to oppose, and as soon as ever the *new man* is crowned, or formed in the soul, he will appear in character, and show his impla-

cable enmity against his rival, against God, who crowned him, and against the person who possesses him.

And if he should, at any time, seem to *crouch and humble himself*, it is that the poor saint may fall by his strong ones, to wit, the devil and wicked men; for they are his allies, or strong ones. And this crouching and humbling work, is considered by many the effects of the grace of God, and that the *old man* is really getting better; and the devil, who always co-operates with him, raiseth up and sendeth forth preachers, with a great deal of mock sanctity, and *voluntary humility* to strengthen the cheat, by extolling the good deeds done by the said *old man*. Now the chief business of these blind guides, or letter preachers, is, to exhort *dead sinners* to do what they are not able to do, and to *send the saints* of God to the law, to judge of their standing before the Lord; and these men being of a legal spirit, they communicate the same to the saints, which causes them to groan and mourn, and, as a darkness is on their minds, they cannot see the cause or source from whence their distress arises, so that instead of coming out from among them, as they are commanded to do, they write bitter things against themselves, and often charge God foolishly, in-

stead of charging these *foolish* preachers with preaching *foolishness*, and of being out of the secret that lies between God and those who love and fear him. As to carnal professors, they receive this spirit gladly, it being congenial with their carnal hearts; and they not having a principle of grace within—being ignorant of their real state and standing before God—taking this legal spirit for the Spirit of God; and these disciples of Moses for servants of the Lord, they become enamoured with them and their preaching, and will follow them, extol them, and support them through all. And these sort of professors being by far the most numerous, is the reason why mere letter preachers are the most popular, as is the case in our day and has been in all ages of the world. This is an evil which I have seen under the sun, in every city, in every town, in every village, and in every country place where I have been. And *human nature*, and the father of lies, are the instigators and supporters of the whole of it, and are well pleased with this fashionable religion; and they consider their interest as much promoted by it as by open vice. Not, however, that this is the only engine they have at work, for all the diabolical pranks, obscene tricks, deep frauds, hypocritical movements, assassinations, sui-

cides, rapine, deflorations and heresies; yea, all the dark and wicked manœuvres carried on under the sun, they are the projectors of, and they are as restless as the tide, turbulent as the wind, ravenous as a lion, mischievous as Satan, and as guileful as a fox; and hence the christian has enough to do to encounter these ruffians, and so he will find it, so long as the *old man* liveth, and the devil is in league with him. I, however, have known this Esau, this first born, to be quite inactive, and as though dead for a time; and I have really hoped, if not dead, that he was wholly out of office, and that I should enjoy the benefits of it all my days; but at length, I have found, that this dormant state was out of mere constraint, and not from his being any better in kind. Jacob once got hold of Esau's heel, and so it happens in the present case, now and then, and when it is so, the *old man* is prevented from doing what he otherwise would do. And, at such times, it is surprising to see how his *strong ones* exert themselves in his behalf, by trying to extricate his feet from the hands of the *new man*—for while they are there, they cannot be said to be *swift to shed blood*, and his strong ones knowing this, they do all they can to set them free. And strange as it may seem, it nevertheless is true, the method pitched on by

Satan in such a case as this, is, generally to irritate, provoke, and to excite the *old man* to wrath, in order that he may struggle most desperately, and thereby disentangle himself from the hands of Jacob, or the *new man*. Isaiah speaks of the enemy coming in like a flood; and Paul says, we are not ignorant of his devices; and among the rest, I think I may say, that I know something of his tricks, and also many of the windings and turnings of the *old man of sin*, or in other words, *human nature*.

And I am persuaded, that those who know the most of him, have the least to say in his favour. But the grief is, there are but few who know any thing of him by experience, and if they should, at any time, speak of him, it is only what relates to his more gross acts; but as it respects his religious movements, they are in the dark about it; here they are out-general-ed by him and his strong ones.

A man may be called a general, and yet not have skill to marshal an army aright. And a man may be called an anatomist, and yet not know how to dissect a human body as it ought to be done. And so here; a man may go by the name of a gospel preacher, and yet not know how to describe the Shulamite, which is as a company of two armies; nor be able to anatomize this *old man*, point out his linea-

ments, describe his parts, show his strength, explain his propensities, estimate the mischief he does, follow him in his serpentine paths, or to make known what he is aiming at, under all. And because many, who go by the name of gospel preachers are not able to do these things, I, like king David on another occasion, would advise them *to tarry at Jericho until their beards be grown, and then return to the pulpit*, 2 Sam. x. 5. And, as they cannot anatomize the *old man*, in course they cannot dissect the *new*, and this being the case, they are no more fit for the pulpit than an ignorant anatomist is to dissect a dead body, or an unexperienced general to lead an army into a field of battle.

None can see and describe the various workings of flesh and spirit, or the *old* and *new* man, but men truly taught of God; it is a secret which carnal men, however wise in other things, cannot comprehend, a mystery too profound for them to scan, a conflict too intricate for them to give a true statement of, and a war which they were never engaged in. If, at any time, as often is the case, a letter preacher undertakes to speak on this subject, and to give his opinion of this warfare, a discerning christian may see enough by the manner of his handling the subject, to induce him to cry out, like one of old, and say to him, "Alas! master,

it was borrowed." i. e. he gathered the whole statement made from books, and from what he has heard others say on the subject. I have seen instances of this almost out of number. In doctrinal points they are not half so much at a loss; for these things they can and do learn in so systematic a way, as to go on for years, and indeed all their days, undiscovered and unsuspected, even by many of the household of faith; and yet they are but carnal men, and mere letter preachers; and we have not a few of them in our day.

How rare it is to meet with a preacher who can in a scriptural and in an experimental way, describe the conflicts of a christian, his intricate path, the workings of the two natures, the stratagems of Satan, the deceitfulness of the heart, the spirituality of God's holy law, the operations of the Holy Ghost on the soul, and the freedom and liberty of the gospel, I shall leave you, my son, to determine. If, however, there be such a person in the borough where you reside, I beseech you, by all that is good to let me know it in your next communication to me, and if my health is spared, I will as surely come and hear him as I draw the breath of life, and will try and compare notes with him on all the above points, and if I should find him *such as I would*, I shall be induced to set him

down as a real disciple of our Lord's. I very highly prize such men, and one reason is, because they are so rare to be met with.

Doctrinal points and christian experience in general terms, are easy to be got at; but a *thorough* acquaintance with the *old* and *new* man lies far beyond the ken of natural sight. Christians themselves are not so well acquainted with those things as they might be and would be, were they more observant of what passes within them from time to time.

But whether they know these things or not, it is an indisputable fact, that one or the other of these two *natures* is always in motion, and very generally both together. And my advice to you is, that you give a good look-out and be sure to "*render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's;*" and when it is well with thee remember me.

And now respecting my visiting your famous borough. I believe that in all my communications to you I have dropt something on this subject: and to this day, I am so cramped up through having so many things to attend to, that I cannot say when I shall be able to be with you. But I hope you will write to me as soon as convenient, and neither spare pen, ink, or paper. I am glad to find that you so very

highly approve and are any ways benefited by my sermon which I sent you. It always gladdens my heart and strengthens my feeble faith, when I hear, (as blessed be God I often do,) of any one's being profited by my preaching or by reading my books; and the more so as there is a great hue and cry out against me, and them. But I can bear with it, and see through it. Some, I am persuaded, object to my preaching and writing, purely out of ignorance of what is truth; I mean graceless professors and blind guides, with which sort of gentry our country is overrun. Others, again, disapprove of me and of my books out of envy, which is as cruel as the grave; and who indeed can stand before envy? Envy is like carnal love, it blinds the eyes and prejudices the mind, and eats as doth a canker. God grant that we may be kept from this root of bitterness and from every other evil, and be saved at last in Jesus with an everlasting salvation. I am determined through grace divine to continue to preach and to write what I believe to be the truth, though envy may lodge a thousand complaints against me for so doing. I am fully persuaded in my mind, that I shall not suffer half so much from their *complaints*, as they of course must from the *cause* which produces them, to wit, *envy*. And as for the *hissing* of

the generation of *vipers*, I pay no more regard, to it than I do to the croaking of a frog. I have another work now nearly ready for the press, which will contain about three hundred pages, of the same fold as my other works. I also have written by far the greatest part of my own life, which I intend for the press when finished.

Write to me, dear sir, as soon as you can, and be as explicit as possible. Write as if you were writing to a friend, as you are when writing to

JAMES OSBOURN.

Baltimore, January 27th, 1821.



LETTER VI.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Grace, mercy, and truth be with you all, Amen.

It is with pleasure, yes, with peculiar pleasure that I now address you. I can truly say that I find my heart very strongly tied to you. I was so well gratified with my visit to G——g that I shall not forget it in a hurry. As my visit was not in vain on my part, so I hope it was not altogether in vain on yours. I hope, also, you

will all look to Jesus, and in him see the salvation of God. When in danger, he is a refuge; when in trouble, he is a resting place; and when panting for thirst, he is the fountain of living water—blessed fountain! dear Jesus! glorious Redeemer!

Are you, at times, fearful whether you are his dear children and true followers, because you see so many defects in your lives; because your hearts are not more melted down at his blessed feet; because you do not enjoy more of his smiles; because your affections are not more drawn out towards him; because you do not serve him better; and because you do not feel and find yourselves so lively as you did when first you knew a Saviour's love? If this be the case, you are not alone, therefore don't despair. Be often calling to mind God's first beginning a good work in your souls; when you were first brought to mourn for sin; when you were first obliged to look up to God for help; when you first sought him, sorrowing in the fields and woods; when the day first dawned in your benighted minds; as also when you first found peace and comfort; when first you experienced the pardon of your sins through the blood of the Lamb; when you first leaned on a Saviour's bosom and rejoiced in him O! my friends, never forget those days, if you know

any thing of them. And also remember that Jesus is still the same; his love is the same; and his grace and truth the same; and he is still wooing and inviting you to come to him. What Joseph, who was a type of Christ, once said to his brethren, Christ says to all his followers, viz. "Come near to me my brethren." How free is this invitation! and how expressive are these words, of our near relation to Christ the great head of the church! Christ's bosom and his arms are ever open to receive you; and they are able also to bear you up and to bring you safe through all. O! fly, fly to these arms, and remember the name they bear also, EVER-LASTING!! "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. xxxiii. 27.

Whatever are your difficulties while passing through this life, never despair so long as the above text stands good and Christ knows how to deliver and is kind to save. Your wants, be they more or less, are all known to Jesus. Do you wish to love the Lord more? he knows it. Do you desire to put your whole trust in him? he knows it. Do you hate sin, and long to be free from it? he knows it. Does Satan try to stop up your path, annoy your soul, and keep you in captivity? Jesus knows it, and he will shortly bruise the old Dragon under your feet.

Wait then, my friends, wait, I say, on the Lord God of Israel in prayer, and read the Bible often. Has not Jacob's God been good to you? Has he not been a fruitful field instead of a barren wilderness? Do not requite him evil for good then; for so sure as you do, it will recoil upon you in a coming day. Be diligent in the use of those means which God hath put into your hands. Beg of God to guide you by his spirit, to be kept humble in his fear, and to enjoy his presence. If you are called to suffer, pray to bear it with patience. We read of some who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Christ—of others, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods—of others, singing at midnight when shut up in prison—of others, forsaking all for Christ—of others, having trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, of bonds and imprisonment, &c. Indeed, the truth is, we must suffer with, or for Christ here on earth, before we are entitled to reign with him in glory; as it is written, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" And after all is said and done, what are all our sufferings on earth when once compared with what Christ went through for us. He toiled through life, he was born to suffer, and suffer he did, and at last in dreadful

agony gave up the ghost on the ignominious tree.

My friends, gaze, gaze intensely on this sin-bearing Saviour. View him stooping under the weight of our iniquities. View him suffering all that fierce wrath and malediction expressed in a broken law. View him grappling with the powers of darkness, and contending with that old seducer. View him in the wine-press of his father's wrath *alone*, with none to help him. View him when despised of men and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. View this immaculate Lamb standing in the guilty sinner's room and stead. View him with his arms extended, with his side broached, and with the sponge at his mouth on the cross. View him in the silent tomb a lifeless corpse. View him as a God, breaking forth from this subterraneous lodgement, and after a while returning triumphant home. And after you have thus viewed him, tell me what all this could mean; and be sure never to forget, that by all these things a foundation is laid for a song of everlasting praise to this worthy Lamb. It is said, *Christ was made a curse for us*. These words include the whole of Christ's sorrows. For as all evils are contained in God's curse, so our Lord suffered and sustained all sorts and kinds of evils due to sin.

His atonement consisted in the imputation of sin in its guilt and filth, with all its cursed concomitants and various aggravations, together with the uttermost shock of divine wrath, the whole load of law curses and the infinite vengeance of a highly provoked God. By these means Christ hath removed all the sins from his dear people out of the way of law and justice; so that when they are sought for they cannot be found, for they are all abolished by Christ.

O! what a strong and lasting foundation there is in the blood of this glorious Christ for our comfort and encouragement. Christ's blood hath in it all the efficacy of eternal Godhead: and what wounds are so deep, that they cannot be healed by the sovereign balsam of so rich a blood? What sins are too great to be expiated? And what diseases too bad to be cured by the blood of him who made the world? How rich is that blood, since it is the blood of the Son of God, and must therefore have infinitely more of value in it, than all sins can have of guilt, since they are the sins of finite men. The blood of Christ is as much above the guilt of our sins, as the excellency of his person is above the meanness of ours. O! my friends rejoice in this Saviour and in what he hath done,

and make your boast of him all the day long. Put your whole trust in him and never despair.

Give my love to friend W——, to his mother, to my German friends, to Mrs. B—— and your two sisters, to the Rev. Mr. M'C——, and his spouse. Write soon and let me know how you are going on, and what has passed between Mr. W—— and you on the subject of baptism. My next will inform you when I shall come. I fully expect it will be next month. Preaching at T—— next Sunday week. When I come I shall try to stop two or three weeks, and preach wherever a door opens. I am thine in love.

J. OSBOURN.

Baltimore, June 8th, 1821.

LETTER VII.

VENERABLE SIR,

Grace and peace be with thee.

Perhaps the first sight of this will a little surprise you as it is possible my name is to you unknown. And lest a suspicion should arise in your mind that this letter is a mere cheat and the author an impostor, permit me to observe, that about six years ago I left the city

fering of body and distress of mind must be—
 A total stranger—almost penniless—four hundred miles from home—in almost one continual rack of pain—a much beloved wife and five helpless children, all pressing like a heavy atmosphere on my already broken spirit, and to make my suffering quite complete, by God, (at times,) deserted.

When at any time I fancied my wife and children to be standing around my bed, endeavouring to administer relief to an afflicted husband and father, and then startle up from so pleasing a reverie, and find it to be but a mere vision of the brain, it has harrowed up all my parental feelings, and left a wound that has bled for hours.

At the expiration of six weeks, I was removed on a bed into a settlement of baptists, where I began to preach before I was able to make use of crutches. And to this day my leg is of no use to me, but it is straight, and I keep preaching and have moved along slowly to the place where I now am, which is about eighty miles from where I was confined.

I, in my present condition, have more than once, preached seven times a week, but what I suffer in so doing no one knows but myself. I am bound, however, to believe all is right,

and that all will end well, however things may appear to me at present.

I would visit your city, now I am in the state, but for two reasons; 1. I am too poor in pocket to undertake so expensive a journey. 2. It might so turn out that I should not be able to accomplish my object in coming; I therefore, have concluded to write to you on the subject, and state what object it is which I should keep in view, admitting I was to visit you.

As I met with so serious an accident on my way to this state, I concluded to take out proposals for publishing my work by subscription when I was at Salisbury; but being so very lame, I am not able to get about to do much even at this. If, therefore, you would have the goodness to put the two subscription papers which I here send to you into the hands of some active person or persons, and request them to get me what subscribers they can, a favour will be conferred on me of such a magnitude, and I should consider myself under such an obligation to you and the friends acting for me, that I never should be able to discharge. If this my request be granted, permit me to observe, that I shall want the names of the subscribers soon enough to print them with the work. If, therefore, they can be forwarded to me at

of New-York and came and settled in the city of Baltimore, which is now the place of my residence. I had not been here long before I was baptized and became a member of the first Baptist Church of this city, then under the care of elders Lewis Richards and Edmund J. Reis.

In the same year I was set apart by the same church for the ministry, and the next year chosen pastor of the Second Baptist Church in the City of Washington, and ordained by Brethren Dodge, Brown, and Cone. In the course of a year after this I was solicited by some friends to return and settle again in Baltimore. I did so; when another church was formed called the *Third Baptist Church*; which church called me for her pastor. By this time I had written a work of about four hundred pages, 12mo. which I published in Baltimore. Soon after this I preached a sermon to my people which is now in print, containing sixty-nine pages, 12mo.

These writings had not been long in print before a few of them found their way into South Carolina, where by many they were read with pleasure, which induced them to write for more, and also for me to visit them if I could. Being repeatedly written to, to come out and bring a number of my books with me,

I, last fall gave up my charge of the church in Baltimore and set out for South Carolina.

At this time I had another work almost ready for the press, and I should have printed it in Baltimore if I had continued there; but as I was going to the south, I concluded to take my manuscript with me, and get the work printed in that state if I could.

I left home on the third day of the eleventh month, 1821, and travelled safely along until I arrived within about seven miles of the town of Salisbury, North Carolina, when my horse ran away with me, and I, to escape the danger which threatened me, leaped from my carriage, and, in the act of so doing my horse kicked and broke my left leg, and made an incision in the flesh sufficient for the doctor to introduce his fingers to ascertain the mangled state of the bones, which were both broken.

Thus, dear sir, was I, on the tenth day of the twelfth month in last year, left on the cold wet ground a victim to pain and sorrow. I lay here in agony and blood, about an hour and a half when I was taken up and conveyed to the nearest house, (or rather a hovel,) where I was confined to my bed six weeks, and where I suffered not a little.

And here, sir, pause for a moment and paint to yourself and imagine if you can what my suf-

Columbia, S. C. in about two months from this date I shall feel thankful.

If my call on you for the above favour should be thought too impertinent, and too much for you to undertake, I shall not think strange of it; as I am not insensible of my having no claim on you, or any other person in your city. At the same time, if any thing can be done for me as above, it will be very grateful to my feelings.

I brought with me into this state, about four hundred copies of my printed sermons, which, if I knew that some of them would sell with you, I would gladly send them; as it is in this way that I expect to raise money to pay, on my way back, the debts I contracted in my late affliction. What my second doctor's bill will be, I know not; but if I may judge of its enormity, by the charge made by the man at whose house I lay, I have cause to be alarmed. Bad as my accommodations were, and God knows they were bad enough, a dollar per day was demanded of me, and in this case, I found the words of Solomon to be true; "*A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a sweeping rain which leaves no food.*" Prov. xxviii. 3.

After this sweeping rain was over, and I became able to travel, I set out for this place, and on my arrival in Salisbury, N. C. I was invited

by the Presbyterians to stop a while and preach for them. I accordingly stopped and preached several times, and was treated in a very handsome and christian-like manner, both by Dr. Freeman, the pastor, and his people. They saw I was afflicted, and they relieved me; and that I was a stranger, and they took me in.

And now, before I bring this rhapsody to a close, permit me to make a few remarks on *divine providence*. Although the footsteps of providence are too mysterious for finite mortals to comprehend, and to us often appear to clash and to be disunited, yet I am bound to believe, they are altogether harmonious, and make a very uniform chain, a link of which cannot be broken without proving detrimental to the whole scheme. And although some of the constituent parts which compose this chain, may, to a near sighted mortal, appear to make much against his own interest, and the cause of God at large, yet, in my *humble opinion*, as the cant is, they are all working together, not confusedly, for good, and shall all be made subservient to God's grand design.

As for my own life, thus far, it has been very eventful and checquered, and not a few painful things have fallen to my lot; and yet I think I can say, "The Lord hath done all things well;" nay more, I feel perfectly satisfied with the

dispensations of divine providence towards me and others, as I can see the hand of God, the goodness of God, and the wisdom of God in them. And although, of late, I have been made to drink somewhat deep of the cup of affliction, yet I have evidently found a mixture of mercy in the same. And I have often thought, and do still think, what an excellent shade affliction is, to set off to the best advantage the tender mercies of God!

Receiving mercy from a covenant God, through the medium of affliction is like good old Jacob blessing his two grandsons cross-handed. But it is to my shame, that I too often, in heart, say to God, when he seems to thwart me, what Joseph in a pet said to his venerable father, "Not so, my father." But my negatives can never alter the fixed decrees of heaven, nor is it fit they should. As it is God's prerogative to dispose of me and mine as he sees proper, so it is my duty to submit to his good will and pleasure in all things. And it would be well for me, if I always reduced to practice what in my judgment I know to be right, as I should then ward off many sorrowful hours, and hard thoughts of God.

If I, through the course of my pilgrimage, had been as teachable as I ought to have been, I should, at this day, have had my head-quar-

ters in Philippians, iv. 11, instead of having my tent fixed as far back as Numbers, xiv. 2.

O what pains (if I may so speak,) does the Lord take to bring us refractory creatures where we ought to be; and how much we resemble the *bullock unaccustomed to the yoke!* Whereas, afflictions and cross providences, if they tend to humble us, to wean us from the world and from the love of sin, and to make us more earnest with God, and more honest with our own hearts, ought to be viewed by us as blessings, though they may appear, at first sight, in such dark disguise.

It must be marvellous love indeed, on God's part, that his blessed Majesty should be induced to take any kind of notice of one so *naturally* vile, so base, and so very wayward in his track as I am. It evidently appears to me that my very nature is such, that nothing but the rod can keep me any where within bounds; the rod, therefore, I may expect. "I will cause them to pass under the rod," says the God of Israel. And what then, Lord? "And I will bring them into the bond of the covenant." Why then should men murmur at *that*, (admitting it be a *rod*,) which brings them, manifestly, into covenant relation with Him whose love is unalienable, his gifts gratuitous, his promise irrevocable, and his *throne as the days of*

heaven? Besides, this covenant is *ordered in all things and sure*; and it ought to be all our salvation, seeing our salvation is wholly wrapped up in it, and by it eternally secured. And this ought to be *all our desire*; that is, all our desires should centre here, and be the very summit of them. We should greatly desire to be better acquainted with this glorious covenant, and with the blessed covenanter and the covenantee.

All the glory of the everlasting gospel is wrapped up in this unalterable covenant, which was agreed on in the ancient settlements of eternity, and ratified and fully confirmed on earth by our Almighty Prophet, Priest, King, Redeemer, and God.

Dear sir, when I commenced writing this letter, I never once dreamt of troubling you with so much as I find I have written; but, I hope, you will take it all in good part and place what is amiss to my account, and believe me to be with

All due deference,
Yours respectfully,

J. O.

York district, S. C. March 10, 1822.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR,

Grace, mercy, and peace be with thee.

I, through the good hand of God upon me, arrived safe in this town on the third inst. I intend visiting your neighbourhood as soon as I can, but am not at present prepared to say when it will be. I have totally forgot what large meeting you spoke to me about and wished me to attend, so that you need not to wonder should I not be at it, but you may expect me some time, and if we are permitted to meet together again, I hope it will be for our good and God's glory.

I am still walking on crutches, and continue very lame. I have also had an attack of the bilious fever, and this followed with the ague, since I have been here, so that I am reduced very low in body. I know, however, that I richly deserve all that God inflicts on me; nor can I think it is in vain that I am dealt with after this sort, I therefore cannot complain. I have also just received a letter from my family in Baltimore with the heart-rending news of the death of one of my little daughters, which dear object is now twining about my heart like the

ivy round the oak tree. Its little form is constantly passing in swift review before mine eyes. O! how strangely do I find myself tied to the little creature. But it is now no more mine. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." All is right my brother; and what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

With regard to the present state of my mind, it is *winter* with me; and when it will be otherwise is not for me to say. I have been removed lately, by Him who does all things well, from the King's *Royal Palace*, to the sign of the *Weeping Willow*; and how long I am to be quartered here, God only knows. The anxiety of my mind to get back again to the *Royal Palace*, once more, to enjoy the king's smiling face and to see his person, is very great indeed.

O! my brother! what is this world with all its dying interest? Or what in fact is religion without something of the enjoyment of God, "whose name is as an ointment poured forth?"

As *winter* very suitably represents the state of the soul when God absconds himself, so the present season fitly holds forth the delightful condition the soul is in when under the sunshine of gospel grace. We now with pleasure behold the fields and woods in their *verdant*

attire; and vegetable plants are putting forth themselves to us in all the *glory of spring*. And what is all this owing to, but the genial rays of the great *luminary* of heaven which God hath there placed for the benefit of man and beast? And so the heaven born soul, after it has languished and pined in the season of winter, and long mourned the absence of its God, is at last brought forth by the reviving beams of the *Sun of Righteousness*; at which time all the graces of the Holy Ghost, in that soul, are brought forth into lively exercise, and the man marches boldly on through the streets of Zion, singing the sweet sonnets of love, thus; "Lo the *winter* is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come."

What a surprising revolution is effected in the mind of a christian, by the entrance of the Holy Spirit with all his benign influences! O! that God the Holy Ghost would return to my soul and dwell there with all his saving benefits, so that I might "sing as in the days of my youth, and as in the day when I came up out of the land of Egypt."

It is this blessed spirit that gives spring and action to the soul, and draws forth all the affections to God. It is this spirit that gives the soul right apprehensions of God, and of the

truth of his holy word. And the same Holy Spirit, takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us, and sets us down in the truth of the everlasting gospel. Yea, it is by this blessed spirit that we draw nigh to God; hold communion with God; walk with God; rejoice in God, and please God. Indeed, if this spirit be wanting in us, there is nothing right as yet, let our attainments be as great and as promising as they may.

This spirit has the *sole* management of the "good work" on the mind of a sinner saved by grace, from the commencement of it, to the consummation of the same in glory. He quickens and makes alive; he enlightens and instructs; he bears testimony with our spirits and seals us up to the day of redemption of the body. He also is the searcher of hearts; the revealer of secrets; the earnest of the future inheritance; the confirmer of the promises; the comforter sent from God; the testifier of Christ; our sure guide to heaven, and the pledge of joy to come.

We know nothing of ourselves, of God, or of truth, as we ought, but by this blessed spirit; it therefore is with propriety said, "He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his."

This my brother is the grand culminating point which crowns all, and to which point we

must all come if we are saved. All religion short of this is spurious, empty, and vain, and will avail us nothing in the great and terrible day of the Lord. Almighty God! grant that we may be hither brought, and be led by the good spirit of God into the great arcana of the gospel;—and of God, and of Christ, and of the adorable spirit, make our boast all the day long.

Adieu,

J. OSBOURN.

Columbia, S. C. April, 1822.

LETTER IX.

HONOURED SIR,

Your letter, dated May 11th, in answer to mine from Columbia, last April, came safe to hand, and I read it with pleasure, and thank you for the same. I am the more pleased with your letter, as it breathes so much of the christian spirit, of humility and godly simplicity, which spirit is not often seen in men who fill such an exalted station in a commonwealth as you have been honoured with. Although I might here indulge myself in strains of flattery, yet, as I am aware it would sour on a mind like

yours, I must deny myself the gratification, and proceed.

I have just been reading and thinking about Joseph and his highly favored land; and as I have now a little time to spare, I will communicate my thoughts to you, which I hope you will not take amiss.

Moses, the man of God, in blessing the twelve tribes of Israel, says of Joseph, "Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren."

From reading this account of Joseph in the *letter*, my mind was drawn out to Joseph in the *mystery*. I thought if so much could be said of the son of Jacob and his land, much more might be said of the Son of God, and of his happy land, gospel Zion.

Our anti-typical Joseph is the glory of the land of gospel rest, and, on his account, it is

greatly blessed. His person is graceful; his name is said to be a *strong tower*; the offices he sustains are of the highest importance to us, and the relation he stands in to the inhabitants of signal consequence. In him all perfections dwell, both human and divine. Through him, all the power, the wisdom, the righteousness, the glory, the mercy, the grace, the truth, the love, and the goodness of the eternal God break forth, and shine with unequivocal lustre, round the whole hemisphere of Zion. In him all the adorable attributes of Deity harmonize, embrace each other, and well agree in the salvation of perishing men. He was the messenger of the everlasting covenant, sent by his Father, with an unparalleled embassy to the sons of Adam; and he entered into our land with all magnanimity of mind, and negotiated business the most momentous; and after having swallowed up death in victory—spoiled principalities and powers—spread universal dismay through the whole empire of darkness—discomfited the allied armies of hell—laid a firm foundation for the building of mercy—established himself sole Monarch in Zion—brought life and immortality to light, and formed a treaty, on the best possible footing, between the offended and the offenders, he returned triumphant home, where *he ever liveth to make intercession for us.*

Thus much for our spiritual Joseph—and now for a few things respecting his land.

This goodly land is blessed with innumerable endowments above other lands, and all for Joseph's sake. When he left this land, where he as a man of sorrow sojourned thirty-three years, he left many blessings behind him, saying, in substance, thus much, "The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine, and a blessing is in it, therefore destroy it not. My peace I also give unto the inhabitants thereof, and not as the world giveth give I unto them, for it is an everlasting peace, which shall not be cut off." Lev. xxv. 23. Isa. lxxv. 8. John, xiv. 27. And these blessings thus conferred on this land, for the sake of Joseph, are said to be *Precious things, chief things, and precious fruits*.

1. *For the precious things of heaven*.—May we not venture to call the surprising revelation which God hath made of himself to us, through the gospel of his Son, one of the *precious things of heaven*? Surely we may; and the more so, as this revelation embraces a great variety of *precious things*.

The oracles handed down to us by heaven-inspired men, inform us what we were as considered in Adam before he fell; what we are since the fall; and also, that we are not able of

ourselves to retrieve the great loss we sustained in the bankruptcy and awful rebellion of our first parents. On the other hand, they clearly inform us where help is to be found, of God's making the arm of his Son strong for himself; and of his being holy, righteous, and just, and yet the justifier of him that believes. In these oracles, the doctrine of justification shines forth with a lustre peculiar to itself, and is fraught with marrow and fatness, well adapted to mortals impoverished and in themselves undone.

Here also we see the breaking forth of immortal love, which like an overflowing sea, emits its life giving streams through a thirsty land, which streams make the wilderness to blossom as the rose, and the solitary places to sing for gladness. In these oracles we likewise have set forth a full and complete atonement, and its power, virtue, and efficacy, expressed in words the most strong and indubitable. Here also the perseverance of the saints is attested and established on a base which nothing can remove, and, at the same time, it affords divine consolation to the weak and to the strong, and to all who are seeking life and peace through our great and glorious Redeemer.

These oracles informed the church in old times, that at some future period, *truth should spring out of the earth; and righteousness look down from heaven.* Psa. lxxxv. 11. And this prediction we know was accomplished when our glorious Leader, who is the Truth, burst the silent tomb the third day according to the Scriptures; at which time righteousness looked down from heaven with approbation upon him, and mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, as it were, nestled together; and with shouts of loud applause, declare the conqueror *risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.* And we, my brother, who believe that Christ thus arose, believe also, that those who sleep in him, God will bring to glory.

Another glorious doctrine is by these oracles brought to light, namely, the union of the head and body, Christ and his church. This precious doctrine is the life and soul of all the rest. If this be destroyed, what can the righteous do? But it cannot be destroyed, for Christ the head is *risen indeed*; and those who sleep in him, as all will who are united to him, will God bring to glory, so that the head and members may be glorified together.

These glorious mysteries being handed down to us by men endowed with wisdom from above,

we may boldly say that the land of our spiritual Joseph is greatly blessed; and we ought to be humble and thankful *for the precious things of heaven.*

2. *For the dew.*—God by the mouth of Moses, says, “My speech shall distil as the dew.” And has not the still small voice of the Lord in the gospel, and his gentle whispers of peace and love by his Holy Spirit to our souls, been as refreshing and as heart-reviving as ever the dew was to the grass and herbs? And often the precious gospel has been to us *like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest*, by which we have *sprung up as among grass, and as willows by the water-courses.*

O! how copiously has this heavenly dew, at certain times, *descended upon the mountains of gospel Zion.* This dew, owing to the refreshing property of it, is said to be *as the dew of herbs.* It comes and goes at the pleasure of God, and produces the effects he intends by it. Those on whom it descends, are awakened and made to sing, as well as to grow up among grass, as we read; “Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs.” And that this dew comes directly from the Lord, we are bound to believe, not only because it produces such glorious effects in our bosoms; but, because the Lord says so himself;

“I will be as the dew unto Israel; and he shall revive as the corn, grow as the vine, and spread forth his roots as Lebanon.” Hosea, xiv. 5, 6.

The unctions of the Holy Spirit, which dew is emblematical of, was poured in copious effusions on Christ the Church’s Head; and the same odoriferous streams are showered on every member of his body, which causes them to look out of obscurity, to speak plainly, to walk with alacrity, and to subscribe with the hand unto the Lord and call themselves by the name of Israel. Indeed, if this heavenly dew did not descend on Zion, she would soon parch up and wither away; but as God has promised to be as the dew unto her, we may expect her ever to be kept alive.

O! delicious drops of balmy dew; how they cheer a fainting soul; how they raise a drooping mind, how they strengthen a languid spirit; how they brace up the feeble loins; how they brighten a gloomy countenance, and make the sorrowful heart rejoice.

This dew is the best antidote in the world against sloth, coldness, carnal security, and dry formality. It also is good in case of an abscess in the breast. And this I know to be a true bill, for I am very much subject to this complaint; but so sure as ever I drink profusely of this dew, the swelling goes down and my

soul is humble within me. I have known some men partake so freely of it, as to forget their former poverty. And I have known others again, feel the want of a little of it so sensibly, that they have been really sick and *ready to die*; and yet they could not die for the life of them. But of such, I have noticed, God takes special care; and often says to his standard-bearers, “strengthen the things which remain, that are *ready to die*.” If these things are so, may we not, yea, ought we not to count this dew one of the blessings belonging to the *land of Joseph*?

3. *And for the deep that coucheth beneath.*—Here we are led to the contemplation of the profound depth of divine wisdom and the amazing height of eternal love, couched in many of the sayings of the inspired writers; and to acknowledge that *the deep things of God* cannot be explored by finite creatures, but that the most we can say, is with the apostle Paul, “O! the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.” The wisdom of God is signally displayed, though only seen in part by us, in the contrivance of a plan whereby he can save sinners while his justice remains immaculate. His love also breaks forth and discovers its flame to a degree far

beyond human comprehension, in reconciling rebel man to himself through the peace-speaking blood of his son. And his almighty power is likewise in a most striking manner exerted in *preserving to the end*, all those whom he *loved from the beginning*. Yes, my brother, the decrees, counsels, purposes, and designs of God; as well as his wisdom, power, love and mercy, are profound depths; and deeply couched in all his works and ways. But though they form an unfathomable deep, we may, without any hazard, place them among the blessings of the land of our antitypical Joseph, and bless his holy name *for the deep that coucheth beneath*.

4. *And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun*.—From these words the man of God is led as it were intuitively to gaze on the *plant of renown*, or Christ the fruitful *apple tree* which is in the midst of the garden of God, and to exclaim, O! the precious fruits that are brought forth by the *Son of Righteousness*; fruits, which if a man eateth thereof he shall live for ever. Here are fruits which feast the soul, and make the *lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing*.

On this tree is to be *found*, and *from* this Son of Righteousness may be *obtained*, good fruit of all sorts. Indeed every thing that the

christian wants to use, to wear, to eat, or to drink, is brought forth by this *sun*, this apple tree; and all comes free of expense, and is very precious. This being the case, we ought to try to get under its shadow, and to be so far delighted with the *precious fruits brought forth by the sun* as to say to others, "These are the blessings of the land of Joseph."

O what love and mercy and grace;—what tenderness, pity, and compassion, is brought forth by this sun in all his words and actions and carriage towards the inhabitants of this land. Thousands of poor broken merchants in this land have been made as rich as Jews, by the great abundance of *precious fruit brought forth by this sun*.

You know my brother, that he hath said over and over again how much he loveth us, what care he will take of us, that he will watch over us by day and by night, and be with us unto the end. He hath also told us what great preparations he is making for us now in heaven, so that we may be accommodated in the best manner possible when we arrive there. He hath likewise said as much, as that our welfare is his interest, and that he hath engaged himself to feed us, to defend us, and at last to take us to heaven.

You also know that he by tasting the bitter-

ness of death, even the death of the cross, hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; and that he hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, and that this gospel is to be preached unto all nations for the obedience of faith.

Moreover, you know that this glorious sun, has not only set up a kingdom in the world which shall never be destroyed; but that he hath shed beams of heavenly light on our benighted minds, and made us *children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness*. Now then my *dearly beloved and longed for*, let us be joyful together for the *precious things brought forth by the sun*.

5. *And for the precious things put forth by the moon.*—The sun and moon are here both mentioned in proper order. We all know the sun has got the pre-eminence over the moon. The sun is larger than the moon, brighter than the moon, higher than the moon, and of greater heat than the moon; and the moon receives all her light from the sun, which is the grand fount or source of all. Now, the sun is said to *bring forth*; and the moon, the lesser light, to *put forth*.

From the above, we are shewn how great the pre-eminence of our antitypical Joseph, the glorious Son of Righteousness, is over the moon,

the church. He was before all things, he is over all things, and by him all things consist. In him the church lives, moves, and has her being. All her light, heat, beauty, glory, and graces, flow from him the fountain and source of all good.

As this sun *freely brings* forth these precious fruits, which we have just glanced at, so the moon *freely receives* them, and binds them about her for ornaments; and being thus ornamented, beautified, and adorned, she is styled the *perfection of beauty* and the *joy of the whole earth*. And, as she so very liberally receives all from the sun, she deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things she stands. Or, thus; she freely, and without making any reserve, puts forth precious things to the sons and daughters of men. And this is done in the preaching of the gospel, when Christ is exhibited, and the fulness and freeness of the grace, mercy, and love of God to perishing sinners are opened up. And here, let me ask you my brother; are there not many very precious things put forth by this moon at times? Have they not often caused the souls of the sorrowful ones to be glad and to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?

With regard to the glory of this moon, I would just remark; Paul tells us that the natu-

ral moon is not without glory. "There is," says he, "one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon." And so Zion is not without glory. The clothing of this moon, is said to be of wrought gold; her food, marrow and fatness; her place of defence, the munitions of rocks; her ornaments, the hidden man of the heart, and a meek and quiet spirit; and the end of her race, the salvation of the soul. If all this be true, may we not bless the sun, for the precious things put forth by the moon?

6. *And for the chief things of the ancient mountains.*—By the mountains here, we have brought to view the great transactions of eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, consulting about the salvation of his chosen ones. The things then and there done, the arrangements made, the plan laid down, the steps that should be pursued, the events that should take place in time, and the end they should all tend to, may well be compared to mountains for stability and duration. In vain do men fight against the ancient settlements of the trinity, as nothing that was there done will ever be counteracted, altered, diminished, or improved. As infinite wisdom adjusted all things for a certain end, so infinite wisdom will see that that very end be accomplished by those very things pitched on for that purpose. And, as

these things were contrived before time began, and so fixed as to admit of no change, they are called ancient mountains.

By the *chief things*, we may understand the two grand objects God had in view under all, and which he will never lose sight of, but will cause every event, either directly or indirectly, to be subservient to his grand design. And these two objects were, and still are, his own declarative glory and the salvation of his church, and these are to be accomplished in that way which is perfectly conformable to his most wise and righteous decrees, counsels, and purposes.

And that these are the *chief things* that occupy the mind of the trinity, we may easily gather from the vast interest which each divine person in the blessed trinity, takes in securing and bringing them to pass.

That God the Father is greatly concerned for his own glory, and for the salvation of the church, is evident from the many things he hath said and done. God the Son is also greatly concerned for his own glory and for the salvation of the church, as appears from the many things he hath said and done, and is still doing. God the Holy Ghost is likewise much concerned for his own glory and for the salvation of the church, as is plain from what

he hath said, and is now saying, and from what he hath done, and is still doing.

If the salvation of the church is one of the *chief things* that concerns the Almighty Father, how happy, how blessed, and how safe must the church be. And if her salvation is one of the chief things that occupies the mind of Christ the Lord, now in heaven, how highly favored is she, and how humble and thankful ought she to be, since his great concern for her cannot fail to end in a complete deliverance from sin, toil, and sorrow. And if her eternal felicity is one of the chief things that engages the attention of the Holy Spirit, and for which all his holy energies are employed, how can the prince of darkness prevail against her so as to deprive her of that everlasting rest, which to bring her unto, is one of the chief things of the ancient mountains, or which engages the mind and the thoughts of a triune God?

Come, my brother, if you are willing, and join with me in placing these chief things of the ancient mountains with the rest of the blessings conferred on the land of our mystical Joseph; and after that, if you please, we will take a view of the lasting hills.

7. *And for the precious things of the lasting hills.*—Are we not here led to contemplate the glorious covenant of grace with all its sub-

time and munificent advantages? This blessed covenant is very lasting as well as very full of mercies, which mercies are said to be *sure*. The covenant itself is said to be an *everlasting* one. With respect to the formation of it, it is declared to be *ordered in all things and sure*. With regard to its worth, a man after God's own heart, protested it was *all his salvation, and all his desire*.

This covenant was founded in love, and hath for its security the oath and promise of God, which can never fail. It was made with Christ the covenant head, and in the behalf of an elect world; and to them it has, and still shall be made known. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." And most *precious* things does this covenant disclose to the heirs of promise, as they have well witnessed in all ages of the world. This covenant was ratified by Christ who is the covenant head, and who was *given for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*. It is called a *covenant of peace*, as Christ by performing the conditions of it, established peace between his Father and those chosen in the covenant. And, as Christ did this to the perfect satisfaction of his Father, his Father hath not only said, my covenant shall stand fast with him, and that his mediatorial

throne shall be established for ever as the moon; but that he will, by the blood of this covenant, bring forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

And now, that this covenant, and Christ the head of it, are as lasting as the hills there can be no question, seeing they have continued from everlasting unto the present time; and that even now there is no prospect of their coming to a close, is evident, for, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isa. ix. 7.

Here, again, I take the liberty of calling upon a once honourable member of congress to assist me, in ascribing glory to God in the highest, for establishing these lasting hills and for the precious things they contain!

8. *And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof.*—Surely we may conclude that the precious things here mentioned embrace all the blessings, comforts, privileges, and enjoyments of domestic, civil, and religious life, as these all belong to the inhabitants of this happy land. Thou knowest my brother, that God hath given us richly all things to en-

joy. And that all things are ours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours; and we are Christ's; and Christ is God's. And this being the case we must not fail to place them among the other blessings conferred on the land of Joseph.

9. *And for the good will of him who dwelt in the bush.*—This bush Moses saw on fire, and him in it who had a good will towards him, and towards the children of Israel, and still has the same towards all his dear people in this our day. His will towards them is so good that he never loses sight of them; nor will ever leave them nor forsake them. He leads them, guides them, feeds them, folds them, carries them, watches over them, and hath promised to bring them safe through all. Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men, we, my brother, may sing in songs of sublime adoration! And so we ought to sing, seeing all these precious things are on the head of our Joseph, which must needs make him a fruitful bough.

These were my thoughts, on the relation given by Moses of Joseph in Deuteronomy, chapter xxxiii, just before your letter came to hand. If you can pick any thing out of my thoughts, now communicated to you, to feed

your soul, do so, and give God the glory of all, for to him all the glory belongs.

Fare thee well,

J. OSBOURN.

York District, June, 1822.

LETTER X.

My dear and much esteemed Brother in the Lord, and fellow Labourer in the Vineyard of God.

Such is my attachment to you for the truth's sake, that I sensibly feel pain at heart whenever I find your mind labouring under a load; and hence, my feelings were highly excited the last time we were together, by seeing you so much disconcerted, and your spirits sunk so low, when they ought to have been on the stretch for God, as we were then standing on the walls of Zion where our voices should have been lifted up like a trumpet. And I felt the more pained when I found your overmuch sorrow sprang from things of a worldly nature, and which had no more relation to the salvation of the soul than the shaking of a leaf. I, however, am aware that the devil is no loiterer

here, but very busy in trying all he can to unhinge the mind for the service of God. But, I have thought sometimes, excuse my freedom, if we could keep the world, with all its dying interests at a proper distance, Satan would not have quite so much ground for triumph, as he often has, nor we to yield to sorrow as we too frequently do. The higher the estimate is, which we set on the good things of this present evil world, the keener is the pain we feel, and the greater do we count the loss, when they are wrenched out of our hands.

But, my brother will say, "An enemy hath done this, or is trying to do it, and that unjustly too. If it had been a visible visitation from God I could have borne it." We sometimes, in cases like this, blame our fellow creatures and think this is all we do; and thus quite overlook what is going on in our own hearts. Whereas, were we to diligently examine ourselves, we perhaps should find, within our bosoms, most shameful rebellion secretly carried on against the sovereign Lord of all.

Besides, wicked men may and they often do, plot against the just, and take away the right of the Lord's poor and needy ones. But can they do this without divine permission? And why are they ever suffered so to do? Answer. God often makes use of wicked men to take

away from his beloved ones, not what is strictly their own, but what he hath lent to them for their use for a season, and what they are abusing by setting their affections too much upon, to the dishonour of God. And when the Lord sees this, and knows that these things are his rivals, and that they are stealing away the heart from him, he will see that they be removed; and though in removing them, wicked men may act unjustly, yet God is just in having them removed.

Nor will he find himself any more at a loss to know how to punish the wicked for acting unjustly in this affair, than he will to clear himself of all charge of injustice in doing what he does.

I once heard of a man who killed his fellow creature on the high road, and took from him all his money, and then retired into a wood to count it. A man, who was in the same wood shooting deer, happening to see the murderer counting his money out on a handkerchief, spread on the ground for that purpose, was tempted to shoot him for the sake of the cash; and shoot him he did.

Now we all know that the man was wrong in so doing, and that the highwayman deserved no such treatment from the hand of the sportsman, as he had not injured him at all. But

then, did he not richly deserve such a judgment from God, against whom he had so foully sinned? Most assuredly he did. Well, if he did, it certainly was at the option of the Almighty to make use of what instrument he pleased to inflict condign punishment. And though we dare not say that God inclined the sportsman to evil; yet, we may say, he was not bound to restrain him from it; and, as he did not do it, the highwayman met with a just reward.

And so when we do that which is wrong in the sight of God, or suffer our affections to run out too inordinately after the perishing things of this life and thereby become neglectful of our duty to God; it is but just and right in the Lord to permit the Philistines to come upon us open mouthed, and to devour the things to which our hearts are so unduly attached.

I do not say that this will apply to you in the present case; but whether it will or will not, I can but think my brother will see a propriety in this way of reasoning.

I also, am of opinion, that you will readily join issue with me in the following conclusion.

Suppose a christian to be happy in his own soul, and all going on well between God and himself; his faith in lively exercise on Christ; his hopes firmly fixed on the Rock of Ages;

his confidence in a faithful God unshaken; his love to his Lord and Master burning like a fire; the promises of the Most High greatly enjoyed by him; the life and power of religion all alive in his breast; an intercourse with heaven daily kept up by him; a spiritual traffic uninterruptedly carried on with the King of kings; and he constantly singing the sweet sonnets of love; supposing, I say, a christian to be thus happy and thus blessed, (and I know by happy experience that this may be the case with a person,) I cannot be persuaded that an adverse providence by which he might sustain a considerable temporal loss would corrode his mind, deject his spirit, sink him so low, or bring on such a gloom, as to unhinge his mind for private and public devotion.

If this proposition be a correct one, and the conclusion drawn, just and fair, how necessary it is that my brother and I should endeavour for so desirable a state, so that when troubles come upon us, we may be so well prepared for them as to rise superior to these little things under which we are too apt to fall, to the great annoyance of our own souls, to the dishonour of God, and to the boast of Satan.

Let us try, my brother, to keep the captain of our salvation in view; seek after him; call upon him; wait in the highway for his coming;

and when he appears, say with one of old, "This is him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."

A sight of this dear friend, the enjoyment of the truth; the approbation of God; the testimony of a good conscience; communion with the Lord of life and glory; heavenly mindedness, with sweet answers to prayer; will carry us far above the fear of men, make us bold for God, and courageous for the truth, both in the pulpit and out of it. Whereas, the want of these things, and the want of them is to be seen in most preachers, is the grand cause of so much warping from truth, so many flimsy harangues in public, and complimentary addresses from the pulpits. Nor can we wonder at these things, for, where the root of the matter is not to be found, men will resort to other things in order to make up the defect, especially, as they want to be thought great in the eyes of carnal professors.

O! my brother, can you not see how things are going on amongst us? And can you not define the cause? I am free to confess, that to me these things are as clear as the sun at noon-day, as also what they will end in.

The great majority of preachers at this time are as destitute of these more excellent things that I have just glanced at, as this let-

ter is of erudition. And yet, as they cry up the religion of the day, are dexterous in making proselytes, and fired with considerable zeal which grows out of the sparks of their own kindling; they pass very well for servants of the Most High God. But things will not always go on thus we may be assured, since a day is coming when the secrets of all hearts will be laid open, and then it will be seen who were on the Lord's side, and who not.

I am persuaded, also, that in this world, God will take his fan in his hand and thoroughly purge his floor; but he will take his tithe as he did of old, for it is holy unto the Lord; and if he demands more I shall wonder, yet I shall not be displeased, as I know he has a right to his own, and more than that, I am sure he will not take.

If many men who are now looked up to as great lights in the church, will not have to say, in the day when the floor is purged, "Our lamps are gone out," I shall very much miss my mark. I know, however, that men may possess great external beauty, and many good natural qualifications, and yet the heart remain unilluminated by the Holy Ghost. I know, moreover, that no outward adorning can ever hide from the view of a real discerning christian, the dreadful defects and awful deformity

of the heart untouched by the spirit of the living God.

Whatever attainments men may arrive unto, and whatever light in the head they may possess, however fluently they may speak, and however popular they may be as preachers, and esteemed and followed by a carnal multitude, while destitute of the grace of God, they are but carnal men and mere letter preachers; and not a few of this sort are infesting our churches at this time. And is it not a most lamentable thing, that free and independent churches, who profess to hold with the pure apostolic doctrine, should suffer themselves to be brought into bondage, and so cruelly imposed on, as they are by mere letter preachers, sooner than they will closely examine the foundation on which these judaizing teachers stand? And is it not out of all character, that people who believe that Christ died for an elect world, and for them alone, should be so far duped, as of their own voluntary choice, to pitch on a man for their pastor, who believes and maintains that Christ as much died for the non-elect as for the elect—for Judas as well as for Paul? And this is what all those teachers and preachers hold to, who believe in the universality of the atonement. And they say, they are bound so to be-

lieve, as in no other way can they preach to sinners, or do justice to the gospel.

Thus, so very tender are these men of the honor of God, that they think it cannot be secured, no, not by the Lord himself, without their believing a falsehood, and imposing the the same on churches whose confession of faith, as well as their Bible, teach them quite a contrary doctrine.

When will the time come that the churches of Christ shall possess light enough to chuse the good and refuse the bad? and when erroneous men shall either be brought to know the truth and contend for it, or be driven from the little light they have got, into darkness and chased out of the world?

If the truth be told, and we are not ashamed to tell it, we have but few men at present of real sterling worth; men, I mean, who know the truth, love the truth, and who will boldly stand up and defend it, and, at the same time, oppose error wherever they see it. But, on the other hand, we have enough who will get into the pulpit and there traduce those for bigots and knaves who know the worth of truth, the danger of error, and are valiant for God and the true interest of Zion in the world.

But, for my own part, I would much rather suffer the revilings of carnal preachers all my

days for the sake of truth, than be given up of God to such blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and such dreadful contempt and perversion of scripture, and of the whole gospel system, as those must be who affirm, that as Christ magnified the law and satisfied divine justice for the elect, it also must have been done for the non-elect; and as it was done for the one as well as for the other, a way is now opened for all men indiscriminately to be saved, if they will but come.

But who are those that do not come, and who might be saved if they would but come? Why if they do not come, and so are not saved because they keep away, they must be those whom God never loved with an everlasting love; whom he never gave in covenant to Christ his son; who never were united to the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who never were numbered with the seed of Christ, for if they had, I should think they would make out to get to heaven almost as easy as the elect themselves; although Christ's dying for them was not quite sufficient.

But let us proceed a little further. As Christ by his sufferings and death satisfied the divine law for his elect and took away its curse, they, of course, cannot be exposed to the penalty of that law which they violated and laid

themselves obnoxious to. If they are, the first payment, by Christ their bail, could have availed nothing. But it has availed something, yes, every thing that was intended it should avail; and hence, it follows that no one can lay any law charges against the elect. *It is God that justifies.* And now, I ask, does it follow, that because Christ hath done this as a *substitute* for the elect, and they through his doing it for them are in a justified state; I say, does it follow, in course, that Christ must have done at the same time just as much for the non-elect? If it does so follow, that is, if Christ by satisfying the law for some satisfied it for all; I will insist upon it that the consequence must be the same, i. e. the non-elect as well as the elect must be in a justified state, and that no law charges can be brought against the one or the other, as there are no charges in the law, Christ having magnified it. For we all know that the divine law of God, when its demands are fully answered, when it is completely magnified, and its course quite taken away, can have no fiery contents to discharge either against the bail or the principal debtors, unless we admit it can and will demand double payment of one debt.

Again—as we cannot be ignorant of this one thing, to wit, that satisfying the law for a people is delivering that people from that law; so

also, we know that if the non-elect die under the law thus satisfied by Christ, they cannot be said to have been delivered from it, which they would have been if it followed that as the law was satisfied for the elect it was also for all and every man. But danger of the most alarming nature threatens us at every step we take on this preposterous ground, let Mr. Andrew Fuller, and those who are dancing after his pipe, say what they may. That Christ satisfied the divine law we know, and this he did in the capacity of a *substitute* for all those for whom he from all eternity substituted himself; while at the same time, it stands in full force against the non-elect the same as though it had never been satisfied for any.

And so, indeed, we may word ourselves on this subject with reference to those for whom Christ never substituted himself; that is, we may say the law is not magnified, the justice of God is not satisfied, the wrath of heaven is not appeased, Christ has not suffered, he has not offered himself a sacrifice; and, as these things have not been done for the seed of the serpent, the non-elect, they cannot be saved. And this is placing things where they ought to be placed, and where in fact they are placed already to our hand, and we cannot alter them, destroy them, nor make any improvement on them.

If these things were not just so, they would be just the reverse; and then it would follow, of pure necessity, that the seed of the serpent must be in the same state and condition as the seed of Christ, as there are no law-charges against any, Christ having taken them on himself and cleared them all off by magnifying the law, satisfying the justice of God, and appeasing the wrath of heaven. And all that may be alledged in support of the serpent's seed not standing on equal ground with Christ's seed, must be frivolous and idle, while it is maintained that Christ's satisfying the demands of law and justice for the elect, must leave room for the non-elect to be saved if they will, seeing the salvation of neither of the seeds depends on their will, but on the purpose and counsel of God. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

I am persuaded there are many christians that have not the least idea of Fuller's system, as it is called, being half so corrupt as it really is. Whereas, it is in brief, a complete subversion of the whole gospel plan, and, of course, is not one whit better than the gross Arminian scheme.

If by Christ's satisfying the law for the elect, who were in union with him from ever-

lasting, it must needs follow it was satisfied for all and every man, it also must follow, as a thing in course, that should the Almighty punish the non-elect with everlasting destruction, it must be contrary to his holy law, as it hath now no penalty annexed to it to inflict, it being wholly taken away by Him who satisfied its large demands and who left it without any authority to curse.—

But our abettors say, the thing is not so to be considered, or so to be taken in reference to the non-elect, though the thing in itself be true. But surely if the thing itself be substantially true, God must have intended men so to understand it and so to explain it, unless we grant he designed to do a thing right, and right he has done it, but he intended that we should understand it wrong, and wrong we are to understand it.

This outrageous error, like an impetuous storm, is sweeping almost every thing before it and spreading its baneful influence in every direction, and yet but few seem to arise to the help of the Lord against the mighty. In lesser matters men do not appear so supine and inactive; for if a pestilence breaks out in a city, the minds of men immediately become excited, and proper steps are taken to stop its progress. But a rampant beast can stalk along the streets

of Zion unmolested and without causing any alarm. Is it not high time for a dividing line to be drawn between the fat cattle and the lean cattle, and no longer to hold out to the world that we are all in peace, in union, of one heart and of one mind, when we differ as widely as do the planets? That every one has a right to enjoy his own opinion we readily grant. But for men of opposite sentiments (and what can be more opposite than the thing in debate, *definite* and *indefinite*) to say that they are all agreed and are of the same mind, is notoriously criminal and hypocritical. And as for saying our difference is but a minor point, is no better than saying that a negative and a positive have but one and the same meaning. For my own part, I am free to confess, that I cannot see how a man can strictly be right in any one point of theology, when in his first onset he has so grievously missed the mark, seeing correct views of the atonement are so essential to our correctness in all other matters of religion.

Therefore when men become vain and wild in their imaginations, and so much concerned for God, as fondly to suppose he will not be able to maintain the honour of his character, and the purity of his justice, without they admit such and such propositions to be correct, though without any shadow of foundation in

the Bible, it is not only right for us to suspect their safe standing, but to come out from amongst them. It is safer, my brother, to cleave to the truth, though but few people join issue with us, than to follow a multitude to do evil. Truth never was popular, but error always was and still is.

I hope we shall ever be able to maintain our ground, for I believe it is holy, and one reason why I believe so is, because there are so few men on it. There is a beauty in truth, which but few can see; and a sweetness also, which but few have tasted. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

O! that we may be the blessed of the Lord; and that we may walk in his light, and that in him our horn may be exalted; then we shall end our course with joy, and triumphantly enter into the glorious kingdom of our Almighty Prince!

Ever thine in the Lord God of Israel.

J. OSBOURN.

York District, S. C. June, 1822.

LETTER XI.

DEAR FRIEND,

May the angel of the everlasting covenant defend thee and guide thee safe through all the vicissitudes of this mortal life.

I am free to confess, that I, in an unusual manner feel concerned for your spiritual welfare, and I can assure you that my *prayers shall be in your calamity.*

When I consider your age, your weakness, your short standing in the camp of Israel, your limited acquaintance with human life, your scanty knowledge of the wiles of Satan, the many snares you will be exposed to, the difficulties you will have to contend with, while passing through this inhospitable world; I say, when I consider these things, fears, without any kind of restraint, hover about my mind, and presage a most impetuous storm which makes my soul bleed within me. And were it not that I know a faithful God is able to keep you from falling a victim to these things, I could hardly bear up under the reflection which I find to be so painful to my feelings. And when I consider that, that same God, who is able to keep you from falling, hath said,

"My grace is sufficient for thee," I feel as though I could trust you into his hands for safe keeping.

And Oh that God may keep you in his fear, support you by his grace, bless you with his presence, strengthen you by his spirit, refresh you with the dew of heaven, comfort you with his word of promise, feed you with the bread of life, assuage your thirst with living water, clothe you with the best robe, guide you by his counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory.

I feel the more for you on the account of your lonesome situation in life, and knowing, also, what you must feel at this time, being separated from those, whom I have the greatest reason to believe, you felt, and do still feel, a tender regard for and love to. But this after a while will a little wear off, and then you will feel more tranquil and serene.

I hope you will look to Jesus and make him your only trust. May Almighty God bless you and do you all the good you need in time and in eternity. Be sure you make free when you write to him who is

Your humble servant

And well wisher,

J. OSBOURN.

Mecklenburg Co. June 25, 1822.

Postscript:

Dear friend, be sure that you express,
 Whene'er you write to me,
 The various feelings you possess,
 In language full and free.

Let not a close reserved mind,
 Keep back from private view,
 Such things of God as you may find,
 While you his ways pursue.

But frank and openly disclose
 Your pleasure and your pain;
 As I am very fond of those,
 Who write in such a strain.

If doubts and fears your mind pervade,
 Or if on Pisgah's mount,
 Be not like those who are afraid
 To give a true account.

But let the whole come out, that I,
 By what you do advance,
 May judge if you are from on HIGH,
 Or but a child of CHANCE.

Dream not that I shall criticise,
 And ev'ry line dissect;
 For I indeed am not so wise,
 As you perhaps suspect.

Seek not for diction when you write,
 But try your very best
 To bring those hidden things to light
 Which occupy your breast.

If over-run with pensive grief,
 Like one who's left alone,
 Say so, as this may give relief;
 Yea, let the worst be known.

Should clouds, of frightful size and form,
 Around your hemisphere,
 Presage a most tremendous storm,
 Don't yield your soul to fear.

For as the clouds, which o'er us roll,
 Are at Jehovah's nod,
 They can't destroy the happy soul,
 That's hid with Christ in God.

And storms are likewise in the hand
 Of HIM, whom we adore,
 And must obey his dread command,
 But they can do no more.

He also manages the winds;
 And all the waves which swell;
 And sends, with rapid speed; the fiends
 Down headlong into hell.

'Tis he supports this earthly ball,
 Which otherwise would soon
 Into a thousand pieces fall
 And die as a torch at noon.

'Tis he who marshals well the stars,
 And makes the sun to shine,
 And over-rules all state affairs,
 To suit some vast design.

'Tis he who gives to man his food,
 And turns the seasons round,
 And always keeps the trackless flood
 Within its proper bound.

'Tis he who constantly supplies
 The wants of all the saints,
 And listens to their plaintive cries,
 And to their sad complaints.

O may you therefore learn from hence,
 To trust a faithful Friend,
 Whose power to do is so immense,
 That he can well defend.

Call not in question what he saith,
 But rest upon his word;
 And try to live a life of faith,
 And glorify the Lord.

God loves to see a beggar BOLD,
 When at a throne of grace,
 As we may learn from days of old:—
 Remember Jacob's case.

"I will not let thee go," said he,
 "Till I am blest indeed;"
 And just so I conceive should we,
 With Jacob's God proceed.

And as the Lord indulgent prov'd
 To Jacob at the stream,
 So he will now be easy mov'd
 By faith which comes from him.

But you will say, "I have not got
 That faith which Jacob had."
 How do you prove that you've it not?
 Because you feel so sad?

But let me farther push this point,
 And try the case this way;
 You know that Jacob had a joint
 Much injur'd in the fray.

And while the sinew of his thigh,
 Weaker and weaker grew,
 He must, as he to God drew nigh,
 Have felt as bad as you.

And yet he wrestl'd, pray'd and cry'd,

'Twas all that he could do,

And to the angel thus reply'd,

"I will not let thee go."

What boldness here—his faith how strong;

What fortitude—what zeal!

And that too, when the vict'ry hung

In very doubtful scale.

At length a conquest was achiev'd,

The angel was o'ercome;

And this, through faith, can be believ'd,

Though doubted much by some.

O may my friend a Jacob prove,

And never quit the field,

Until the Lord of boundless love,

By faith is brought to yield.



LETTER XII.

DEAR SIR,

As you in your letter manifest a great deal of candor and openness of mind, I, in making a reply, shall use great plainness of speech, and at the same time, hope that the Lord may seal home instruction to your heart.

It may be you are all that you say you are, and a great deal more; you may also perform all that you say you do, and yet fall vastly

short of being a christian in heart. You may be a member of a church, as it seems you are—be in high esteem among professors of religion, concerning which you speak with *emphasis*—be thought well of by your minister, which you appear to glory in—be much applauded for your zeal and diligence, which seems a sweet morsel to you—possess a good talent for exhortation, respecting which you throw out some broad hints: but alas! know ye not my good sir, that all the above things may be true and yet you remain a total stranger to the power of God and to a radical change of heart? Believe me when I say, that you may attend public service constantly, pray frequently, and read continually, and yet as to spiritual things be as blind as a bat and as dead as a stone.

Real religion, sir, and vital godliness is something more than all this; and I am sorry to find your letter savor so *much* of the former and *nothing* of the latter. You seem to make a great bustle and noise, but what does it all amount to when properly dissected and squared by the word of God? Why to me it appears like a puff of empty air! I do not write thus, sir, to discourage, but to correct you wherein I conceive you seriously miss the mark in matters of the highest importance. I hope I shall not be thought to transgress when I say, If you

have not had the fountain of sin in your own heart broken up; if you have not felt and discovered the wrath of God in his holy law out against you as a sinner; if you have not found yourself under the arrest of justic and thereby exposed to eternal ruin; if you have not had that sound sense of your lost condition as to make you fly from the wrath to come; if you have not had a knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins; if Christ has not been formed in your breast the hope of glory; if you have not laid hold on eternal life; if you have not hungered and thirsted for divine things, and been desirous of knowing more and more of Christ Jesus whom to know aright is life eternal; if you have not been made in some good degree sick of sin, sick of self, sick of this world, and willing to part with and leave all for Christ; I say, if these things have not in some measure taken place and been experimentally known by you, your hope is fallacious—your peace is a false one—your faith is fantastical—your joy is delusive—your knowledge is speculative—your love to God is feigned—your fear is servile—your change of heart is mere notion—your religion is vain, and you are yet in your sins, notwithstanding all the great out-cry that you are now making

about your religion, and your wonderful change of mind.

True religion, sir, is, and real christianity consists in something more than mere notion or whim. It is not what a man may *think he is*, but what God has *actually made him to be*, by an act of mere mercy and grace, that constitutes him a true disciple of Christ. Not a few in this our day are, it is to be feared, setting themselves down satisfied, as I fear you are, under an impression that all is right between God and their souls, merely because they are thought well enough of to be taken into church fellowship, and some other outside things which they find about themselves; such things I mean as you lay so much stress on in your letter. O sad mistake! and a most awful delusion this, and a day is coming that will disclose it and make it fully known; and then how grievously will they be surprised and astonished who have made lies their refuge, falsehood their covering, and an arm of flesh their support!

I wish, dear sir, that you may not be one of this sort. I, however, shall have just cause to fear it until you can give a better account of yourself than you have hitherto done. I find you are not at a loss for words to express your ideas. Indeed your letter bespeaks the scholar, and such I know you are, but I do not know

that you are a christian, nor can it be known from what you have communicated to me. Your state, sir, in the sight of God is not bettered by your joining a church, though you fondly imagine it is. Permit me to say, that if your heart be not right in the sight of God, which it cannot be unless God sets it right, it matters not what outward show you make, or what people may think and say of you. It is Christ in the heart, the hope of glory, that constitutes a real christian; whereas Christ in the mere notion of him will avail but little in the day of trial, or in the hour of death.

Many have known enough of Christ, of themselves, of the law of God, and of the gospel of his Son—of the plan of salvation, and of the stability of the covenant of grace in the theory, to get themselves a great name amongst men, and a high station in the church for many years together, and perhaps all their life time, and yet, when they have been summoned to appear in another world, they have found themselves totally destitute of that which alone can make a dying bed easy. There was but one leper out of ten that returned to give glory to God, and he was a stranger, a poor Samaritan, see Luke xvii. 15. And so it often happens among the great crowd that make a profession of religion and become members of churches; it is

only now and then a poor stranger that comes in for the blessings of the gospel, and he is generally looked upon by graceless professors as a Samaritan, and as one no ways friendly to them.

When the Lord singles out one for himself from a company of graceless professors, and opens his ears to discipline, opens his heart to receive the truth, opens his eyes to see wondrous things out of his law, and opens his mouth to shew forth his praise, he will speak of what he has known, felt, handled, and tasted of the word of life. And as he can very generally tell a hypocrite from a real saint, he will take the liberty of pointing him out, and will state some of his hypocritical windings and turnings; and, as he also knows truth from error, he will receive the former and reject the latter, admitting the latter proceeds from a clergyman. But as these steps will prove very offensive to those who only have a name to live, his name will soon be cast out as evil, and be viewed as a pestilent fellow, and as one who is trying to turn their church upside down; whereas he is only trying to undeceive those who are deceiving themselves and others. I do not thus write, sir, with a view of discouraging you from attending to that which is good, but to caution you against wolves in sheep's clothing,

and in trusting in a name to live while it may be you are dead.

Man is naturally prone to fly to a false refuge, and to content himself with a false peace. This refuge is like Zoar, near to fly unto; and it is one of the hardest things in the world to persuade a man that his hope is delusive; and yet I am convinced if God should stir up all his wrath against a man who is in a delusion, however confident he may be of the safety of his state, it would cause his beauty to fade like a leaf. And if this should take place in your experience, sir, it is more than ten to one, with me, that you would cut a very different figure to what you may now expect. O sir, try to think how astonished you would stand, in case your present certainty of salvation was overturned, overturned, overturned, and brought to nought, and your confidence rejected, Jer. ii. 37. It is surprising to think, and impossible to tell, how the burning wrath of God revealed in a broken law and sent home with full force to the conscience, does scorch, wither, consume, and burn up a man's false religion, false faith, false hope, false joy, and false peace.

It is evident from the oracles of God that none will be able to stand in peace and composure in the day of the Lord's wrath but those who have their anchorage in Christ Jesus, and

who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us in the gospel. All false props, sir, will in that day totter, sink, and fall, under the man who leans upon them, and his guilty soul will be exposed to all the curses contained in the book of the law. A mere form of religion and an outward show only, will then doff its flattering charms, and appear in its true garb. If men were rightly apprised of this, surely they would never dream of taking rest in such outside things as now they do.

Believe me, dear sir, it is not an outward profession of religion, but an inward possession of the grace of God that constitutes a christian. Not knowledge in the head, but the root of the matter in the soul that insures eternal life to us. Not what he says, but what he feels, proves that there is divine life in the soul. Not what he does for God, but what God does for him, makes him meet for the kingdom of heaven. It is not fancy, but faith that purifies the heart. Not a vain confidence, but a good hope that keeps the soul buoyant in the day of evil. Not the esteem of men, but the approbation of God that brings peace to the troubled conscience. Not being united to a church here below, but being one with Jesus the true and living vine, makes our

standing eternally secure. Not natural passions stirred up, but the oil of joy poured into the soul that makes a man forget his poverty and remember his misery no more. Not partaking of the bread and wine at the Lord's table, but feeding on Christ by faith makes him flourish, thrive and grow. Not a name to live amongst men, but a name written in the book of life, proves him to be a vessel of mercy. Not a blind zeal, but a zeal according to knowledge, is what God approves of. Not what we may be thought of by those around us, but what God's thoughts towards us are, is that which will be the decisive vote at the day of death. These things, it may be, will greatly astonish you, but so sure as there is a God they are the turning points in religion, and on them our eternal salvation hangs. Look to it, therefore, and do not trifle or think lightly of things of such vast moment, for if you do, it may prove to your cost in a day yet to come.

If our names are not found written among the living in the spiritual Jerusalem, we shall be cast out as withered branches, let us attain to what place of honor and greatness we may in the church below. As to your being *in good standing among professors*, this is but a small matter when compared with some other things. And how a man of your sense and

reading, can be so exalted and enthusiastically carried away with such *little things*, I cannot account for in any other way, than by St. Paul's rule; "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Should God be pleased in the multitude of his tender mercies to open your eyes, and bring you to see things as they really are, you will look back on your present state with surprise, and see it to be as perilous as I now conceive it to be.

Do, dear sir, turn these few things over in your mind, and investigate closely into your standing before the Lord, and *be not deceived, for God is not mocked*. I would advise you to read the Bible very attentively and earnestly, to beg God to set you right if you are wrong, as it is to be feared you are. Pay less regard, sir, to the good opinion that men may have of you, as they will not be your judges in the great day of accounts, but God will be the judge, and by his decision you will stand or fall. Consider, also, how many have been deceived in the end about the business of salvation and the goodness of their state, though before they seemed to possess an unshaken confidence of their being right. Examine well

the ground of your present hope, the foundation of your faith, and what authority you have to draw such a determined conclusion, that your heart is right in the sight of God. Bear with me while I once more say that I stand in doubt of you, and that I can see no just reason on the face of your letter, for you to conclude, as you now do, that your condition in the sight of God is a good one.

This however I know, God is able to do great things for you, and I know not but he will, and perhaps, he is at work with you now. If this should be the case, the work will progress and be brought to rich perfection, and you will have cause to admire his grace and to be thankful for his unspeakable mercy. Seek for those things, my dear sir, and God Almighty grant that you may be successful.

With regard to myself, I must needs say, that the esteem and good will of men, admitting they are christian men, have but little weight with me, yea no weight at all in reference to my standing before God. I am constrained to look to a much higher source for a foundation on which to venture my immortal part. Nothing short of a believing view of Christ crucified for me, and the witness of the Holy Spirit in my breast, will carry me ascendant over fears and doubts whether all is right or not. And,

inasmuch, as nothing less than these things will satisfy me, I must still doubt the safety of those who are contenting themselves with things of so trifling a nature.

It may be that my great plainness with you will give offence; but I must risk this. In matters of religion we ought, like Paul, to use great plainness of speech, and not as Moses, who put a veil before his face, that the children of Israel might not see to the end of that which was to be abolished. Write again, sir, whenever you think proper. Say what you please, only don't get angry, and if you do I won't. I am in good bodily health. I hope this is the case with you. You know where to write to me.

Adieu.

J. OSBOURN.

LETTER XIII.

DEAR SIR,

I here gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your letter on the 9th inst. I am glad to hear from you; but you make yourself out to be a most monstrous sinner in your own eyes. And indeed it may be that you are quite as bad as you appear to be. But then, it does not make

against your being saved by grace, nor prove that you are beyond the reach of mercy; but quite to the contrary, for as you have proved yourself to be a mighty sinner, I can as easily prove that you need a great and an Almighty Saviour; and just such a one the Bible reveals.

I the Lord, mighty to save. Isa. lxiii. 1.

And nothing in the world, I think, can match better than a great sinner and a great Saviour.

And you know as well as I that Christ's errand into this world was to save sinners, and that saving sinners is a thing which he delights in, and that in order to make a rich display of his grace and to show his power to save, he sometimes pitches on very great sinners, even such as we are, and thereby grace appears to be what it is, sovereign and free.

But is it not a little strange that a sinner when quickened by divine grace and made sensible of his lost condition; who finds himself just ready to sink into eternal ruin, should raise so many objections against his own salvation as he often does, when God has not raised one, but has given every encouragement for a poor, broken-hearted sinner to come and partake of the water of life freely? But surely Satan must have a hand in this, seeing he is so vexed when he finds that his fold is rifled, or any of his vassals concerned about their eter.

nal welfare. And, if I mistake not, Satan has been busy with you of late by your doubting whether you have any right to the name of a christian merely because you feel so much unlike one. We, my brother, are, in this matter, to judge by the word of God, and by so doing we shall find that we are encouraged to look, to come, and to rest on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation; vile, wretched, miserable, and unworthy as we may find and feel ourselves to be.

Remember, therefore, that the very idea of your being a sinner, and feeling it, proves at once that you need a Saviour. In the Bible you find one—one who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him. Go to him, sir, and as bad as you are he will receive you. Take his own words for it, “He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” And when you go, be sure to be open, honest, and upright, and tell the Lord what you are and what you feel yourself to be—confess all, and make the worst of it—keep nothing back—smuggle nothing—cover nothing—keep nothing from the Lord, but let the whole come out and the worst be known. Tell him of your fears, your doubts, your temptations, your besetting sins, your conflicts of mind, your heavy burdens, your trials, and all that grieves your soul.

And, at the same time, implore divine aid, crave forgiveness, beg for mercy, beseech God's favor, plead the merits of Christ, acknowledge his ability to save, lay before him his promises, his covenant engagements, the relation he stands in to his church, and the great responsibility he took upon himself in behalf of his church. In short, make free with the Lord of hosts, come in all the confidence of faith, importune, solicit, entreat, beg, pray, cry aloud, spare not, encompass him about, (not with lies as Ephraim did,) but with his own words, and lay hold of him by the girdle of his loins, and rest your whole weight on the girdle of his reins. Isa. xi. 5.

Now if all this be done in faith, it will be well done, and its being well done, I am of opinion that you will obtain all that you stand in need of; and if not, I am bold to say that you will receive as much, if not more, than what you deserve.

We will now hear what God says by way of encouragement to those who seek him. "I will deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. I will be found of them that seek me, when they search for me with all their heart. I will hear the groaning of the prisoner, and loosen him that is appointed to die. I will draw nigh unto those

that draw nigh unto me. He that seeks me early shall find me. For the oppression of the poor and for the sighing of the needy now will I arise, and set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. When they call I will answer. I will bring the third part through the fire. I am thy God, I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, yea I will strengthen thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

All this, and much more, the Lord hath spoken and divine veracity has engaged to make it good if you can but believe it; and indeed if you believe not, God abides faithful and cannot deny himself. You say God hears certain characters, and not all and every one. It is true the Lord hears certain characters, even such as are bowed down under a sense of their guilt, sensible of their lost state by nature, and who are flying from the wrath to come—willing to be saved in the Lord Jesus Christ—convinced in their consciences that they deserve the frowns and displeasure of God—at the same time fully persuaded in their own minds that there is no salvation out of Christ, and therefore they are willing to part with all the joys of sense to obtain salvation by him.

These, sir, are the characters that the God of Israel hears and answers. For this remember, when God inclines the heart to pray, he is

sure to incline his ear to hear. This has often been an encouraging text to me, and I think it must be so to you, as I am persuaded God has set your face towards his holy hill, and that he is now weaning you from this world by giving you to see the vanity of it, and by embittering sin and sinful ways to you. And that he will sooner or later favor you with the pleasure and happiness of walking with him at large, I am convinced, seeing he has inclined you to go after him in chains, and I know also that he will not forsake the work of his own hands, nor leave the soul to perish which he hath quickened by divine grace.

Rest assured, sir, that as soon as the Lord has thoroughly weaned you from the world, from sin, from self, and from all besides himself, and when your strength is all gone and there is none shut up or left, and you feel deeply sensible how much you are in debt to God, and yet have nothing to pay with—are completely stripped of all confidence in an arm of flesh, and are willing that Christ should be all in all, and you nothing at all but a poor sinner and a debtor to free grace: then will God arise for your help, and proclaim your full release!

My brother, in the furnace we must abide until the old leaven of self conceit, self suffi-

ciency, and self righteousness be purged out of us; for until then there will be no room for real humility, contrition, compunction, self abhorrence, self loathing, and godly sorrow. But as soon as ever God has, by the furnace, formed the vessel for himself, it shall come out and shew forth its Maker's praise. Isa. xliii. 21.

Know ye not, my brother, that God is fond of music? and that music will not sound well in a pit? but that upon a rock it will sound most melodiously? God then brings sinners out of the horrible pit and places them upon a rock, presents them with golden harps, puts a new song in their mouths, and then bids them sing, "Let the inhabitants of the rock sing." Isa. xlii. 11. Now, my friend, when you get upon this rock your notes will of course be more shrill, clear, distinct, and musical than now they are, while you remain in the deep mire where there is no standing, and while your life is hanging in doubt. But as soon as ever God turns your captivity, you will be like those who dream, for your mouth will be filled with laughter, and your tongue with singing, and you will tell to those who love and fear God what great things he has done for your soul. Psa. cxxvi. 1, 2.

But even then, you will be as much at a loss to know how to describe and set forth the

greatness of God's power to save sinners, as now you are to point out the enormity of your sins, and the deceitfulness of your heart. But we are going on almost too fast, for the year of jubilee is not yet. And it may be before you enter upon the place of broad rivers and streams, you will meet with many a dark and cloudy day, many wearisome nights, many trying hours, many attacks from Satan, many conflicts, hard struggles, and desperate combats. But should this be the case, be not disheartened for St. Paul says, "My God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory." Phill. iv. 19. It also is said that, "Your shoes shall be iron and brass, and as your day, your strength shall be." Deut. xxxiii. 25. Again it is said—"God will lay no heavier burden upon you than you are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way for your escape." 1 Cor. x. 25. Again—"And when he has tried me, he will bring me forth as gold." Job, xxiii. 10.

But friend, believest thou this? John, xi. 26. If you do, well, and if you do not, your unbelief will not make the promise of God of none effect, for I will work, says God, and none shall let it. The building of mercy shall be carried on let who will oppose it. Sanballat and Tobiah withstood Nehemiah and made

use of all the means they could to prevent the building the walls of Jerusalem, but all in vain, the work was of God, and go on it must, and go on it did, in spite of the devil and all his servants. "And the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." Neh. chap. vi.

And in like manner will Satan and the powers of darkness oppose the work of God now going on in your soul, but it will be fruitless toil—labour in vain—and strength spent for naught—for the fabric of mercy shall be reared let who will say nay, and the top stone shall be brought forth with shouting in defiance of the gates of hell. "I will work," says God, "and none shall let it." And Paul says, "He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it."

And this being the case, I am sure you have no cause to doubt it. Do let me beg of you, therefore, to come to Christ just as you are, with all your sins about you, for you cannot make yourself better, and keeping from him is not the way to find mercy, and if mercy is not worth asking for and seeking after, it is not worth having. Go then, my friend, go as a poor, wretched, miserable, perishing, vile, despicable, worthless, helpless, and undone sinner. Because to know this experimentally,

in reality, in deed and in truth, is all the recommendation, requisition, and qualification that God looks for or expects from you. And indeed, all this is his Holy Spirit's doing, and it is what God will never despise, world without end, Amen.

Cheer up then, my good sir, cheer up, the way is plain before you; Christ is the mark set before you, he is the Saviour, the refuge, the hiding place, the gate of life, the living vine, the spiritual apple tree, the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley, the rock of ages, the sure foundation stone, the king in Zion, the prophet of his people, and the great high priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

But in order to be thus cheerful you must learn the art of looking more to Jesus, and less to yourself. It is by looking to, resting on, and believing in the Lord of life and glory, that we honor and glorify the God of grace, mercy, and truth. We little think how shamefully we reproach our Maker by unbelief. Unbelief is the devil's master-piece, and the main pillar on which the whole fabric of iniquity is reared. It strikes at the veracity of God, infringes on his sovereignty, tries to make void his oath, draws the sword on Deity and pierces as it were the Great I AM. It empoverisheth the mind, contracts the most enlarged heart, leads the

soul astray from the right way, brings it into bondage, sets it all in an uproar, and makes it quite outrageous. It also blinds the eyes, deafens the ears, enfeebles the loins, fetters the tongue, hardens the heart, benumbs the conscience, and stiffens the soul with pride.

But on the other hand, faith, which is the gift of God, and which stands in direct opposition to unbelief, acts differently and produces different effects. It honors and glorifies God, brings distant objects near, trusts God where by sense he cannot be traced, gives full credit to the word of promise, cleaves to the Lord under every disadvantage, concludes all is well in the midst of surrounding difficulties, buoys up the soul in the day of trouble, draws comfort from the faithfulness of God, follows where the Lord leads, laughs at opposition, and views the path of tribulation to be the best way to heaven because it is the one which the Lord himself has marked out and laid down for his people to walk in.

If you, sir, had this faith, you would be a rich man according to the definition which the Bible gives of a rich man. And I will be bold to aver, that were you in full possession of this gift of God, faith, you would do Christ the honor, and yourself the pleasure, of looking more to him and less to yourself than what I fear you

now do. Don't you think so yourself? If I thought you would learn any thing from the children of Israel in the wilderness, and the serpent of brass on the pole, I would lay before you that circumstance, and show in a few words what a striking analogy there seems to be between their looking to the serpent on the pole, and a poor sinner stung with guilt looking to the Son of man, who is lifted up on the pole of the Gospel. Indeed whether you will gain any thing by it or not, I will venture to say something about it.

Those of the children of Israel who were bit by the fiery serpents, which the Lord sent amongst them, were directed by Moses their leader, to look to the antidote provided, which was a serpent of brass placed upon a pole, and exhibited in the Hebrew camp, and they that beheld it, lived. Sovereign Remedy!

This was intended to represent to us in the gospel dispensation, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is fairly exhibited in the New Testament as the only sure physician of sin-disordered souls. And now see what this teacheth us. 1. They were bitten by fiery serpents: A deadly poison this we are sure, because, of the bite much people of Israel died. Is not your conscience at this time deeply tainted with the venom of guilt? Has not Satan, that old

serpent, struck his deadly poison in your breast? And have you not cause to fear and good reason to believe the disease to be mortal, unless a remedy can be found, which will, when applied, extract the poison which has so contaminated all the powers and faculties of your soul? And may we not say, and do we not know it to be a truth, that of this disease much people die?

What then can be done; the disease is still raging and people are dying daily? Done! Why there is something done already to our hand. What is it? "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John iii, 14. And now secondly, how did the Israelites obtain a cure? By doing as Moses bid them, which was to look to the serpent of brass which he had erected upon a pole. "And when they beheld the serpent of brass they lived." Num. xxi. 9. What induced them to look to so simple a thing as a serpent made of brass? One would suppose that the sight of a serpent would have been repulsive to them, seeing it was by serpents that they were bit and so grievously diseased. Answer. It was their misery, and a sense of the consequence of the same, that induced them to look to the serpent of brass, as Moses had commanded them.

Apply this to yourself, or permit me to observe that you are sick with a worse disease than were the Israelites, and you appear to be as deeply sensible of the alarming consequences as were they, and a remedy is provided for you as well as there was for them, and to this remedy you are called upon to look, as well as they were to look to the serpent on the pole, as we read, "Behold the Lamb of God." John i. 36. And when you, by faith, behold this sin atoning Lamb, instead of finding the object to be repulsive, you will admire and be astonished to see what a similarity exists between the object from which you receive a cure and the object by which sin entered into this world. Adam, the first, brought sin into the world, and Christ, the second Adam, taketh away the sin of the world. Adam, the first, was in human form, and Christ, the second Adam, assumed the same form. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham!"

A third lesson we also learn from this singular circumstance of the bitten Israelites and the serpent in the wilderness. They, when bit, were ordered to look to the remedy provided, and not to the disease. I think this will well apply to your case, my dear friend. You ought, as I have all along told you, to look directly to Christ, and not so much at that which grieves

and burdens you. In Christ there is rest and peace, but you must not expect to find this in yourself. Look to Jesus then, and when you have obtained a cure, let me know it. I hope it will be soon. I long to see you brought forth. I have had my eye upon you for some time. Make freer than usual when you write again. Give my love to your family. Tell J. R. that I want a few lines from him. I am quite weary with writing, I have been at it so long. It is past midnight. But it is not uncommon for me to write more than half the night away.

I am yours, in love,

J. OSBOURN.

THE END.

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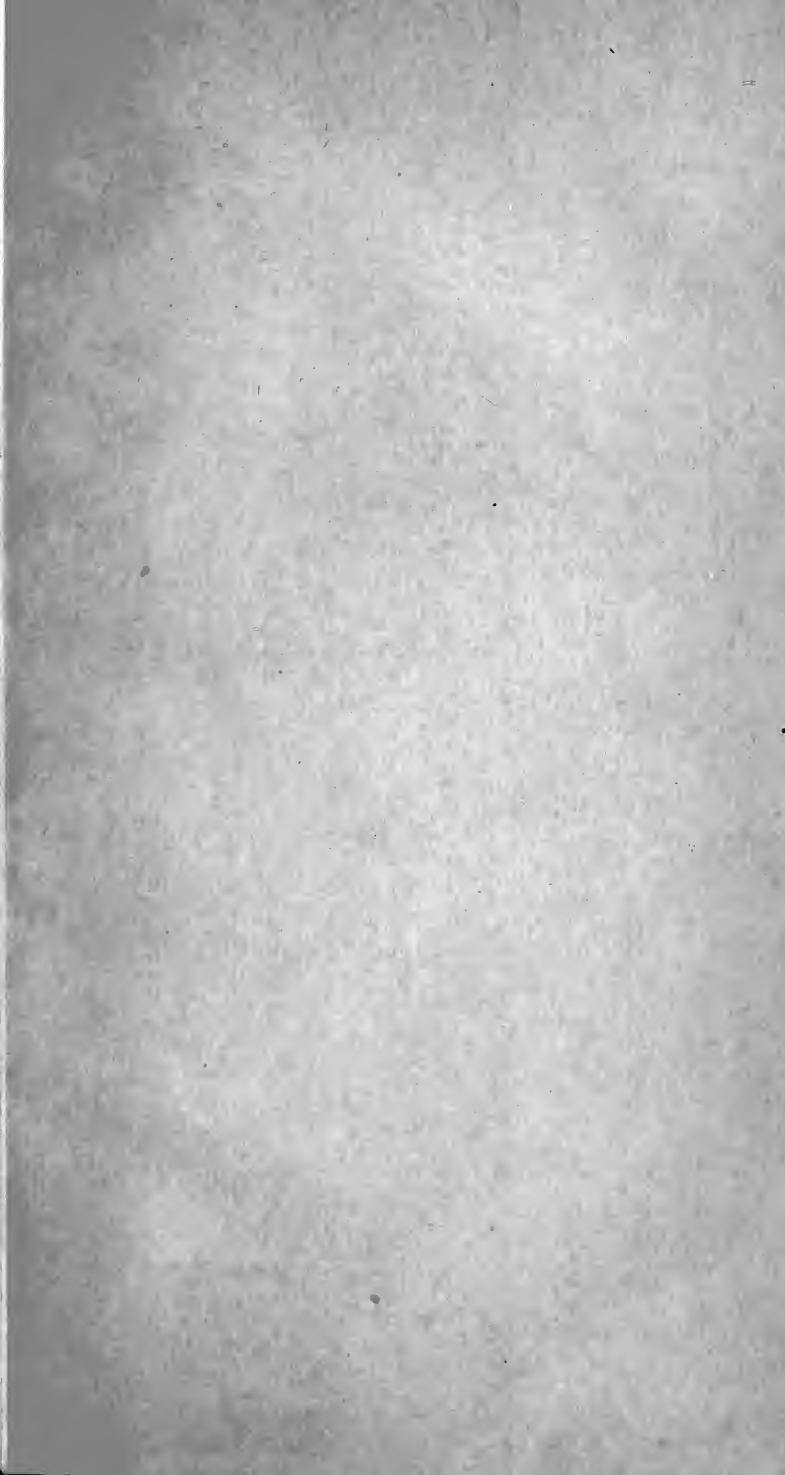
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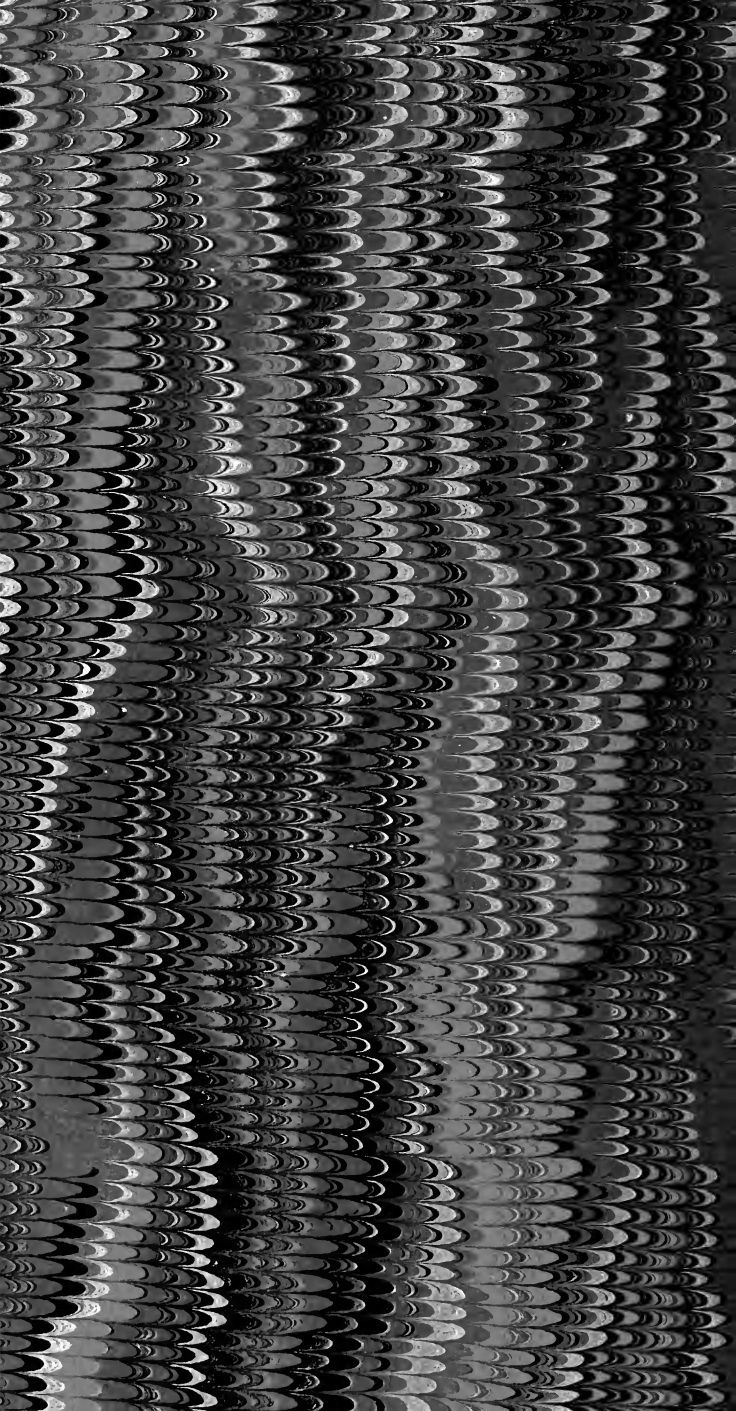


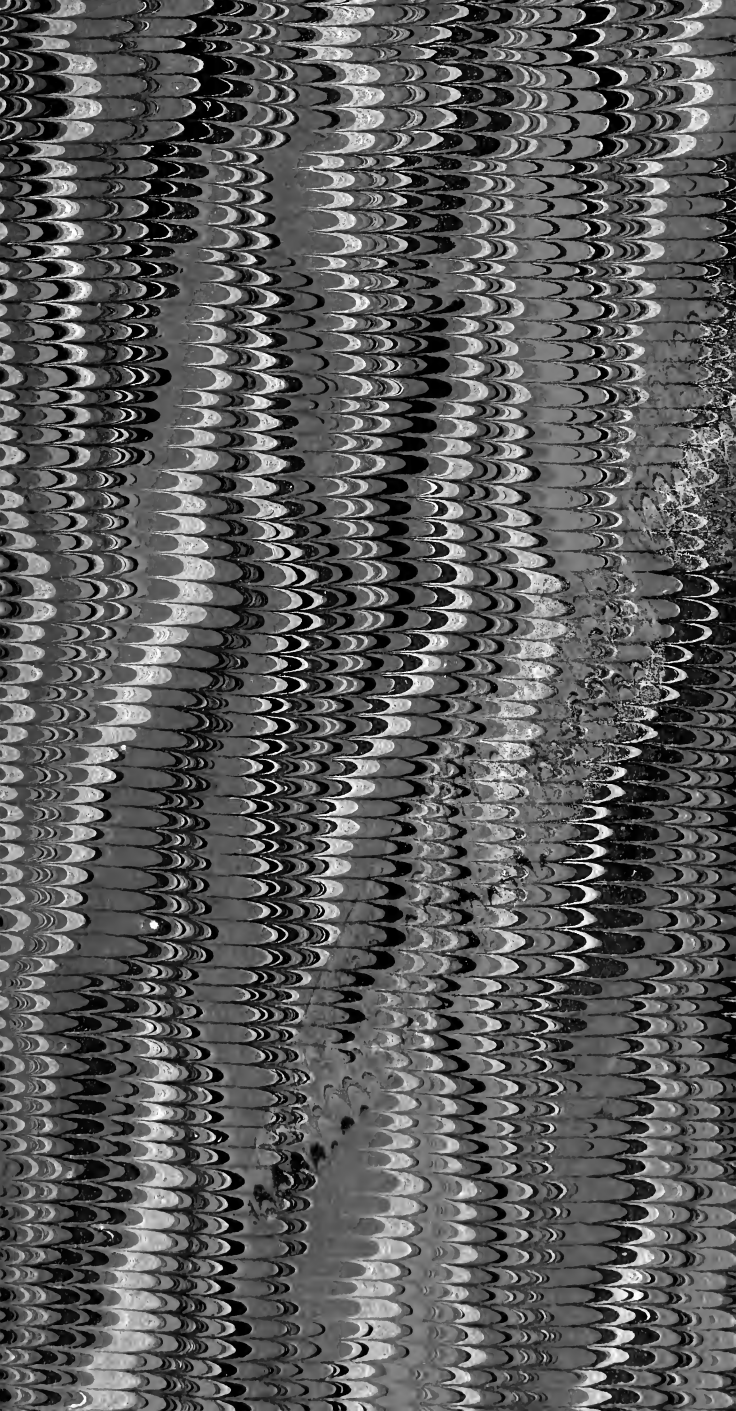
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